



C#13

One year ago, the first number of this publication was produced. Lizzie Perrotte, who directs the MLitt course in Modern and Contemporary Art and Art World Practice, had long wished for something more to come from the efforts in critical writing produced on the course. This at last happened in the form of C#12. We are very proud of the efforts that first editorial team put into a pilot issue of the magazine and what they achieved -- they laid a solid and lasting foundation to build upon.

The group who came forward to lead the production of C#13 approached the project as their own and drove the magazine to new levels of quality and coverage regarding content and design. With this issue we expand to include material produced by writers from courses at Christie's Education in the Arts of China, those of Europe and then Art, Style and Design. Alongside this expansion we have invited Alumni to contribute to the magazine as both advisors and writers. We are very proud and pleased with what they have accomplished with C#13 and hope you will be too.

John Slyce
Senior lecturer,
Modern and Contemporary Art:
Approaches / Methods / Practices

Project Managers

Misha Michael
Stefan Nicoloff
Regina Lazarenko

Editors

Amy Bower
Natasha Cheung
Shmoyel Siddiqui
Valerie Genty
Yvonne Kook Weskott

Designers

Carrie Engerrand
Jeffrey Hurwitz
Kali McMillan
Shahrzad Ghorban
Zoie Yung

Illustrator

Zoie Yung

C# 13 Advisory Board

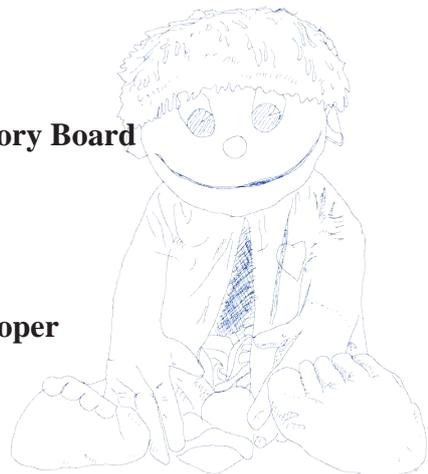
Alexandra Schoolman
Cassie Edlefsen Lasch
Diane Vivona
Emily Labarge
John Slyce
Michele Robecchi
Rachel Farquharson

Christie's Education Staff Advisory Board

John Slyce
Kiri Cragin
Thea Philips

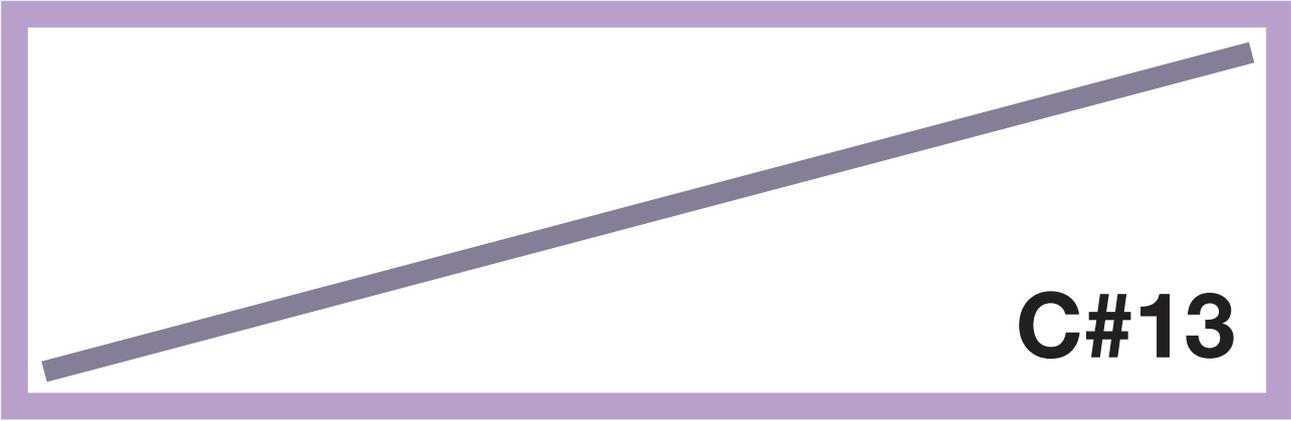
Freelance C#13 App Developer

Pietro Romanelli



INDEX

Editor's Note	i	British Art	29
Acknowledgements	ii	Artist feature on Sarah Jones	
Index	iii	Kali McMillan	30
Index	iv	Serpentine Pavilion 2013	
Venice	1	Philip Zollinger	32
Conversations with Alfredo Jarr		Interview with Peter Fraser	
Sofia Bocca	2	Valerie Genty	34
Chilean Pavilion Review- Alfredo Jarr		Michael Landy's Saints Alive at the National Gallery	
Shmoyel Siddiqui	5	Amy Bower	38
Brazilian Pavilion Review-Odiros Mlászho		Haroon Mirza's /o/o/o/o/ at Lisson Gallery	
Stefan Nicoloff	9	Jeffrey Hurwitz	40
Israeli Pavilion Review- Gilad Ratman		Cornelia Parker at Frith Street Gallery	
Shahar Molcho	11	Chloe Ballin	42
American Pavilion Review- Sarah Sze		Anne Hardy at Maureen Paley	
Tom Petrides	14	Chris Sullivan	44
Turkish Pavilion Review- Ali Kazma		Sound Art at Calvert22	
Asli Hatipuglu	16	Anastasia Aleeva	46
Canadian Pavilion Review Shary Boyle		Peter Lamb's A Place That Exists at Laurent Delaye Gallery	
Misha Michael	18	Carrie Engerrand	49
Irish Pavilion Review- Richard Mosse		Per Kirkeby's Late Works at Michael Werner Gallery	
Esther Kendal	21	Beatrice Loeffel	51
Bosnia and Herzegovina Pavilion Review		Pino Pascali and Jannis Kounellis's Within a Common Horizon at Luxembourg & Dayan	
Caterina Mestrovich	23	Rebecca Niehaus-Paas	53
Re-staging ideas or "When Attitudes become form- Bern 1969/ Venice 2013"		Interview with Spartacus Chetwynd	
Isabelle Nowak	26	Yvonne Kook	55



C#13

Emerging Artists

Artist feature on Stephanie Roland

Astrid Carbonez

Artist feature on De Monseignat

Shahrzad Gorban

58 Robert Mapplethorpe's Au Debut
(works from 1970 to 1979)
at Xavier Hufkens Gallery

59 **Pauline Simon** **82**

The Fondation Beyeler Review

62 **Natasha Cheung** **85**

Artist feature on Ron Muek

Tiffany Tang **87**

LITE Art Fair Basel Review

Veronica Li **89**

HK Art Basel review

Suchao Li **92**

More than Ink and Brush

Wang Yizhou **94**

Selling Out to Big Oil?

Huw Pritchard **96**

The Frozen Beginnings of Art

Sarena Zacarron **99**

Interview with Lee Kit

(in traditional Chinese)

Zoie Yung **101**

Are You Alright? Exhibition Review

Rachel Anne Farquharson **104**

Notes on Oreet Ashrey

Alexandra Schoolman **107**

Sharjah Biennale Review

Diane Vivona **110**

Global Art & Affairs

Beirut Art Center Review

Dominique Porter

Interview with Vito Acconci

Bianca D'Ippolito

Interview with Pak Sheun Chuen

Wing Yung

Steve McQueen's Retrospective

at Schaulager, Basel

Ekaterina Belyaeva

Contemporary Arts as Alternative Culture

Anakena Paddon

A Failure to Communicate

Hillary Chasse

A Failure to Communicate

Ha-Thu Ngyuyen

Keith Haring at Musee D'Art Moderne

Elena Efermova

64

65

67

69

73

76

78

80

83



VENICE

BIENNALE

Sofia Bocca in conversation with Alfredo Jaar

The immersive site-specific installation Alfredo Jaar has created to represent Chile at the 55th International Venice Art Biennale is both evocative and critical of how today's global culture is represented in the iconic exhibition. Made out of grey clay, the Giardini's pavilions are a shadow, a ghost, which after a few seconds disappears into stagnant waters only to reappear again; the same way in which every two years the Biennale's structure returns into scene without any substantial alteration. With his poetry, the artist denounces the Biennale's hierarchic architecture from more than a hundred years ago and its obsolescence to represent today's world order. When the water floods the Giardini swamping the pavilions, Jaar seizes this as a utopic space, which opens up an opportunity for rebirth.

Sofia Bocca: How was the idea for the Chilean Pavilion born?

Alfredo Jaar: In December 2010 I was asked by the Chilean Minister of Culture to represent my country in Venice Biennale 2011. Since that gave me only six months to think about the work and do it, I rejected the proposal. I was very lucky to be offered at that time the possibility to represent my country in 2013. This was a great advantage because I had more than two years ahead to work on my project. No artist has ever had that much time for Venice, so I found myself in an exceptional position. I was the first artist to go to Venice in January this year and could choose the room at the Arsenale where to place my work. I started thinking about *Venezia, Venezia* in 1986 when Achille Bonito Oliva invited me to Venice to present a work for the section 'Aperto'. I was a young artist at the time and this invitation was a life changing opportunity for my career. I was terribly shocked when I visited the Giardini only to discover that solely twenty-eight countries are represented and that nobody seemed to challenge that reality. Now I have been to the Venice Biennale fifteen times and I am always surprised how people throw parties and never question the fact that many countries are still not present at the Giardini. Even the Pavilions many countries are still at the Arsenale are not as central as the ones at the Giardini. If you look carefully at the reviews, many don't even mention the countries at the Arsenale, they just concentrate on the Giardini. It's as if the Arsenale is an off-site and they don't even bother visiting those countries. those countries.



Alfredo Jaar, Venezia, Venezia 2013, metal, grey resin, pigment-ed water, 5 x 5m, Chile Pavilion, Arsenale, Venice

SB: The Giardini's geography is reminiscent of a previous world order and doesn't reflect our globalized era anymore...

AJ: The display of the pavilions does not correspond to the reality of today's world culture, it's an obsolete order: for example, you have Britain, France, Germany and the USA in prominent positions, but what happens when an artist from Africa goes to the Giardini? There is no African pavilion in the Giardini, so does this mean that African culture doesn't exist? That's when you suddenly realise that the architecture of the Giardini is not innocent, but communicates ideas and thoughts. In 1968 Gillo Dorfles and Germano Celant proposed a new order for the Biennale suggesting to destroy the existing pavilions and creating a new building where the curator would invite the artists from all over the world to participate. Of course their project was rejected, but I wanted to bring back this discussion on the table and do it in the most poetic way possible.

SB: How do you think the Biennale model will evolve looking forward and what are your thoughts with regards to Germany and France exchanging pavilions?

AJ: What I would expect if my work has any influence for the future Biennales, is that in ten years' time, there will be a curator inviting artists to work with the architecture of a given pa years' time, there will be a curator inviting artists to work with the architecture of a given pavilion. They will be able to invite who they want and finally the model of nationalities will disappear into history. The origin of the artist won't be relevant to the work; people will be looking at the artist's work. The match will be between space and work, instead of nationalities.



What France and Germany have done is at a superficial level, they are always two of the most important pavilions at the Giardini, exchanging buildings between themselves. At the end of the Biennale the German pavilion will continue to be Germany and nothing drastic will have happened. It could have been more interesting if these countries would have offered their pavilion to a country which is not present at the Giardini. I think my work goes even further; it questions the whole nature of architecture of the Giardini.

SB: You belong to a generation of 'international artists', are you the first artist from this generation representing Chile in the Venice Biennale? I mean, is it the first time Chile shows in its pavilion work that doesn't reflect the artistic scenario of the country?

AJ: Chile has been present with a Pavilion at the Arsenale only since 2009. Before that, they exhibited artist's works at the IILA (Italo-Latin American Institute) called the Latin American Pavilion. The display of works was not particularly interesting and many times it was curated in a confusing way.

SB: The image of Lucio Fontana coming back to his destroyed studio in Milan is a reflection on Italy's current cultural situation?

AJ: The first image you see hanging from the ceiling is a light box with an image of Lucio Fontana from 1946 when he returned to his studio in Milan and found it completely destroyed. The following twenty years after this event were the most extraordinary for Italian culture. It was an amazing turnaround. Italy which had been destroyed morally and physically during the war, was back into the world. An extraordinary group of Italian intellectuals from filmmakers to writers and artists have changed the course of history with their work. To me this is a demonstration of how culture can affect change. After this image you cross a bridge which is inspired by the thousands of bridges all over Venice with their work. To me this is a demonstration of how culture can affect change. After this image you cross a bridge which is inspired by the thousands of bridges all over Venice, to go somewhere else. Then you face the model of the Giardini that disappears into the water and it's an act of resistance and rebirth. An act of Renaissance is happening in front of your eyes. The message is that culture is resisting but culture can also be self-critical, something politicians are not able to do. Culture is re-emerging to be inquisitive of the Biennale.

SB: Can you tell us how the model was created?

AJ: First of all we asked an architect's studio from Venice to make a survey of the Giardini and the model was made in grey resin in a 1:60 scale by a construction company in Rome, called Iacun. They are responsible for the construction of the MAXXI Museum designed by Zaha Hadid and have long been specialized in the nautical sector. They designed the tank and the hydraulic system and we tested it in Rome many times until we were completely satisfied.

The model will emerge 24,860 times during the Biennale at intervals of three minutes, being visible to the spectator for just thirty seconds. The colour of the water with time will become greener as the colour of the Laguna. The model is already suffering from constantly going up and down and the constructor from Rome will be going to Venice on Monday, when the exhibition is closed to the public, to try and come up with a definite solution.



Detail of Alfredo Jaar, Venezia, Venezia, 2013

SB: Considering the site-specificity of your installation, will your work travel somewhere else once the Biennale is over in November?

AJ: The work was done for Venice and the production costs were very high. My Italian dealer is working with museums and private collections to find a definite place for the work in Venice, where it belongs.

*Image one: picture of Lucio Fontana standing in the middle of his destroyed studio
All images courtesy of the artist*

Venezia, Venezia

The volatile and tense nature of the incessant global dynamics has always been a subject that has captivated Alfredo Jaar. Whether about exile and migration, violence and penury, or other plights of global or ideological incompatibility, his critical outlook evokes a reassessment of established conventions and complacency.

Nearly thirty years ago, in 1986, Jaar was invited to show his work in the 'Aperto', or 'Open' section of the Venice Biennale, becoming the first Latin American to participate in the international exhibition. Nearly thirty years later, he returns to the ethereal city of water and stone to represent his native Chile at the 55th edition of the exposition. For this year's Biennale, Jaar has produced his most elaborate and costly project to date. His evocative site-specific installation, *Venezia, Venezia*, guides the audience through a subtle arrangement of time and space, a theatrical play of light and dark, and over an arching passage reminiscent of the iconic bridges of Venice.

In the pavilion, the viewer is confronted by a suspended lightbox, illuminating a black and white photograph amid the dimmed atmosphere of the space. Measuring 2.5m x 2.5m, this vast scale projection depicts an image from 1946 of Argentine-born Italian

artist, Lucio Fontana, precariously poised amidst the ruins of his Milan studio in the immediate aftermath of World War II.

The image evokes a memory, a moment in history when the world was emerging from the calamities and destructions of war. And yet it equally recalls an historic cultural moment: at a time when Italy had collapsed, having lost the war and gained a global reputation as a Fascist state, a remarkable group of intellectuals – writers, filmmakers, and artists alike – rebuilt Italian culture from its very foundations in less than 20 years. Creating a cultural revolution, they reintroduced a 'new' Italy to the world and ultimately, changed the course of history. The image is an homage to all these intellectuals in the single embodiment of Lucio Fontana; but more importantly, the radiating photograph serves as an opening statement to the installation, expressing the significant role of art and culture within society.

Beyond this image of both destruction and revitalisation, the audience is immediately met by the ascending steps of a bridge, one suggestive of the many iconic passages found across Venice. In evoking the character of the city, the spectator is invited to reengage with the present space that they occupy, with the memories of the past resonant in their



thoughts as they advance to the next part of the installation.

A flat stone surface levels the ascending steps, setting the stage for a unique spectacle. Under the shining spotlights, a prodigious metal pool stretching five metres in length and width, and rising one metre in height, becomes a dramatic arena for an historic utopia and a conceptual contingency for reconstruction. Filled to its capacity with turbid green water that mimics the canals of Venice, the surface of the pool begins to flurry as a perfect replica of the Biennale's Giardini space emerges from the water. At a 1:60 scale, the model structure made from grey resin rises above the surface momentarily, leaving the audience just enough time to recognise the view before swiftly sinking back into the opaque water and disappearing completely. At three-minute intervals, the performance is repeated, bringing the water back to its ominous, motionless state.

The Giardini model becomes a physical manifestation of the complexities of globalism. As the structure arises from the water, so too do all the vulnerabilities of its template.

Following the inauguration of the exhibition in 1985, the countries invited to build the first national pavilions were elected as early as 1907, consequently expressing the monarchic order of the time. Today, these antiquated

structures still stand, amongst a diminutive cluster of only 28 foreign pavilions included in the entire Giardini. And with the increasing popularity of the event, 160 participating nations are forced to search the Arsenale or a dislocated area in the labyrinth of Venice for a space to rent at tremendous prices.

In *Venezia, Venezia*, the disappearance of the entire Giardini infrastructure into the water is a critical stance against the Biennale model. Drowning the model eradicates the inadequacy of the Biennale's outdated propensity of global hierarchy in the face of current contemporary culture's globalised nature. In dialogue with the photograph of Fontana standing atop his demolished studio, the evanescent Giardini becomes a conceptual opportunity for new possibilities and reconstruction.

Nevertheless, of the handful of permanent pavilions set up in the Giardini, only two are dedicated to Asian countries, and not a single one to an African nation, save Egypt which is North African. As the archaic structures of the Giardini endure the test of time, the spectacle of an everlasting Western hegemony undoubtedly becomes a strong undercurrent in Jaar's installation. The Giardini therefore becomes not only a reflection of an obsolete blueprint, but also a mirrored reality of the



world we occupy today. In an ever-increasingly globalised world where the potential for international democratization and economic affluence has never been greater, we find instead a subversion of democracy and a discrepancy in power between the more affluent countries and underdeveloped nations.

As such, Jaar seeks to criticise the way culture replicates so perfectly the imbalances of our world. In a field of creativity, he creates a new canvas; an empty pool without the physical traces of an old-fashioned Biennale model, only a ghost of what was, in the brief emergence of the Giardini. The installation piece is an invitation for the spectator and the institution alike, to propose an adequate world stage, compatible with today's culture in all its global complexities.

Venezia, Venezia is therefore an instigation into the re-imagining not only of

the Venice Biennale, but of nationalism and globalization also, and the relationship between nations that are and are not represented in the Giardini.

Shmoyel Siddiqui

*Alfredo Jaar, Venezia, Venezia 2013
(Installation view)
Metal, grey resin, pigmented water, 5m x 5m
Chile Pavilion, Arsenale, Venice
All images are courtesy of the the artist*

Odires Mlászho at the Brazilian Pavilion

Brazilian artist Odires Mlászho is one of five different artists presented in *Inside/Outside*, Brazil's National Pavilion at the 2013 Venice Biennale. Curated by Luis Pérez-Oramas the Brazilian Pavilion builds off ideas of permanent exchange between audience, work, and members of the institution - ideas drawn directly from the 30th Bienal de Sao Paulo – *The Imminence of the Poetic* (2012). Mlászho's work is introduced through the development of the Mobius strip in Brazilian art history, a role made present by the selection and juxtaposition of Max Bill's *Tripartite Unity* (1948-49), Bruno Munari's *Concave/Convex* [Concavo/Convesso] (1947), and Lygia Clark's *Soft Work* [Obra mole] (1964).

Photomontage is Mlászho's preferred methodology – a process where the formation of another subject occurs, through the production of a composite photograph, by the act of cutting and pasting two or more photographs together. His interest in photomontage comes from a deep admiration for both Max Ernst and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, two artists he considered to be masters of the technique. Born Jose Odiros Micowski, the pseudonym Odires Mlászho is an anagram of his own name along with that of Ernst's and Moholy-Nagy's. This anagram indicates the twist he takes on these historic artists' use of photomontage.

The overlap of contexts (Dadaist and Constructivist) within Mlászho's own artistic practice are brought forth from, and bear witness to, his interest in both Ernst's and Moholy-Nagy's use of photomontage. Ernst created new images by cutting and pasting photographs together, preferring to reveal the process of their creation rather than an illusionistic reality. Moholy-Nagy explored ideas of photographic reproduction through series and sequences in order to bring forth conversations surrounding how the repetition of images creates visual clichés - when an image is emptied of its meaning and becomes a unit of recognizable overall structure or design. The different approaches to photomontage converge on, and influence, Mlászho's practice.

Mlászho's unique application of photomontage is most clearly demonstrated through his sculptural works. Constructed from several copies of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, these sculptures are on display in the second room of Brazil's National Pavilion.

Blind Books, 2012, exists as two, oval-shaped, sculptures that sit atop a waist-high shelf connected to the wall. Each sculpture is made of two copies of *Encyclopedia Britannica*: hardcovers stacked, positioned in the middle, and visible from the side. The pages of these encyclopaedias protrude from the books' spines and, appearing as if woven together, are actually glued in place above and below the centre. The result is an oval construct of encyclopaedia pages: spine and hardcover located in the middle.

These encyclopaedic sculptures embody a method of photomontage through the visibility of their materiality and process – the stacked hardcovers, obvious layering, and gluing of encyclopaedia pages is analogous to Ernst's cutting and pasting of different photographic sources. While Ernst unpacked the constructed nature of photographic reality, Mlászho draws our attention to the paradoxical structure of language; defining the limits of human knowledge and giving meaning to our surroundings. He opens up an epistemological investigation by applying the technique of photomontage to encyclopaedias.

Photomontage becomes evident in these sculptural works through notions of epistemology: a shared connection between the photographic and encyclopaedic.

The encyclopaedia defines the limits of knowledge through a primacy of the visual (written language: an extension of the eyes). The photographic connects to this visual epistemological field through the camera's status as a mechanistic extension of the eye.

With photography's ability to capture its subject, limits of knowledge are stretched. Through this act of acquisition photography gave birth to the optical unconscious: it made visible to the naked eye what was previously invisible. This rupture of never-before-seen material expanded our scope of knowledge, lent validity to the photographic method, and helped establish notions of photographic truth. Photography was positioned as a discipline that defined new parameters of knowledge. Entirely sourced from the unconscious, the camera's lens is psychoanalytic.

It can be argued that the concept of the mirror-image is what connects the photograph to the psychoanalytic. Thus, the simultaneous concept of alienation and

recognition in the mirror-image is applied to the photograph; it describes the relationship between one, an-other, and the Other. One can describe this simultaneous concept as: inevitable disjuncture. Both the photograph and psychoanalytic enable a process of inevitable disjuncture that connect: with language.

The previous discourses (epistemological and psychoanalytic), materials and processes (encyclopaedias and photomontage), constitute a network of meanings and concepts that are dependent on language – the first moment of trauma – to articulate them. The necessity of language to describe an image – from which a resultant discourse might be drawn – positions the optical unconscious and the mediating role of photography as bound to language. The implementation of the photomontage technique on non-photographic material is validated by the material discourses of epistemology.

Mlászho exploits the method of photomontage in order to bring forth inter-textual dialogues adjacent to historical and epistemological shifts. Creating a series of sculptural works, he proposes that all semiotic systems are dependent on discourse, paradoxically extending, while at the same time limiting, knowledge. Mobius strips and semiotic systems share thus in common; they remain closed circuits of mediation that give meaning to our world but continue to do so through an inevitable disjuncture.

The Brazilian Pavilion positions the marriage in Mlászho's work between material and his signature use of photomontage in a much narrower context. Although an intrinsic connection between the artists and the context of the Mobius strip can be certainly established, Mlászho's works do not solely demonstrate or embody "one of Brazil's strongest originary modern narratives - that of a culture constituted by a ceaseless creative metabolization of the Other" - as is asserted in the adjacent corridor's wall panel. Instead, Mlászho's choice to subject the *Encyclopedia Britannica* to photomontage brings about fundamental questions permeating a tripartite interrelationship (epistemological, psychoanalytic, linguistic) that find origins in the simultaneity of alienation and recognition that inevitably give form to individual identities.

Stefan Nicoloff

The Social Task: Gilad Ratman at the Israeli Pavilion, Venice

Gilad Ratman was selected to represent Israel in the 55th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. It was a bold decision, which indeed proved right. Ratman, born 1975, lives in Tel Aviv. He received his BFA from the Bezalel Academy, Jerusalem, in 2001 and his MFA from Columbia University in 2009. Primarily a video artist, Ratman has exhibited internationally over the past five years. His work mostly explores the liminal regions of language, culture and society. However, any literal generalizations would fail to illustrate his inimitable imaginary world that, for this specific occasion, went underground.

Guy Debord, in *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), argues that in modern society authentic social life has been replaced with its representation. He describes a culture in which the image has lost any true meaning and takes on alluring exterior form, ultimately presenting a boastful vision of self-representation. Recently, Claire Bishop stated that Debord's critique on capitalism as the catalyzing force in alienation in modern society is central in the discourse of participatory and collaborative art that emerged in the 1990s. According to Bishop, the social task is not sufficient; the work must be considered, discussed and evaluated as art. Ratman's search for social togetherness, a sort of collaborative element, is a recurring theme in his practice. He often chooses to work with his circle of friends rather than with professional actors, to create authentic situations that require a strong physicality from the participants. For *The Workshop* Ratman flew the whole group of participants all the way to Venice. By doing so, he transformed the pavilion from an exhibition space into a production space, a true workshop, a social encounter, one that the viewer can only follow and experience in retrospect as art. Ratman uses the unique architectural space of the Israeli Pavilion to develop the layered narrative of *The Workshop* (2013). The viewer enters the dark space of the lower level and instantly encounters an open hole in the pavilion's floor. A film is screened on the wall behind: a DJ sampling various voices into pound-



ing music that fills the space. The DJ shown in the video is in the pavilion itself, standing in the exact same location of the screening. In a second screening a group of people is filmed in an extremely long shot, preparing for some kind of action in a peripheral area, an outskirts of a city. After climbing up the stairs to the middle level, the viewer encounters a third screening that presents the same group, only now they are in the midst of an underground journey through dug tunnels. They dig together, eat together, and sleep together, when all is completely silent. The film ends with the moment of breakthrough from the tunnel to the outside world. This moment of the film explicitly links the protagonists with the physical space and explains the hole in the floor of the pavilion - their exit from the tunnels. The upper level consists of a two-channel screening installation that reveals what was hiding at the other side of the tunnel. On one screen the group is shown bursting out from the hole into the ground level of the pavilion. The members of the group clean themselves and immediately turn to their mission – launching a sculpting workshop. Each member starts modelling their own portrait in clay, while two tutors walk around the workshop, offering their assistance. Here also, all is done in silence. The strong voices come from the second screening that reveals what happens in the workshop later on: once the sculptures are completed, the participants insert microphones into their clay portraits; each “artist” begins to groan, scream and shout into their own figure.

The sculptures are laid on wooden plinths, shown in two clusters on the ground level and on the middle level of the pavilion, accompanying the viewer on their quest in decoding the narrative. These weird, distorted faces, lit softly within the dark environment of the pavilion, appear to be historic artefacts. Interestingly, in this way, they correspond with some of the ob-





jects on display in the main show of the biennale, resonating well with the theme of “The Encyclopedic Palace”, curated by Massimiliano Gioni. Gioni’s show focuses strongly on the object, form and craft. Some of the artists are unknown, forgotten or even non-artists, who together form a representation of the human knowledge and imagination. Amongst other issues, the show explores ways in which the object itself may hold a great social influence, even stronger than that of a well planned social art action. In a similar way, Ratman’s workshop does not aim to represent a naïve and pure social utopia; but rather the opposite. Although stated: “Gilad Ratman’s presentation reflects on the Biennale as a utopian model of nations’ connectivity”, in fact, the workshop does not hold any specific national characteristic: the landscape that signals the beginning of the journey is quite general and can be identified as anywhere, thus, the starting point is everywhere. There is no sign of a specific language, only a return to some kind of a pre-linguistic stage, an expressive production of sounds. This is perhaps what lies in the heart of the work- an attempt to refer to the idea of togetherness in its essence, and moreover, a potential failure in achieving it.

Shahar Molcho

*All images: Gilad Ratman, The Workshop 2013
Video stills Courtesy of Braveman Gallery*

Venice Biennale American Pavilion, Sarah Sze

Famed for her ability to change space by altering the viewer's perception and experience of architecture through large-scale, site-specific interventions, Sarah Sze was chosen to transform the 1930s Palladian-style United States Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale.

The experience of *Triple Point* begins long before the unsuspecting viewer enters the grandeur of the Giardini. In Venice you will never find a naturally occurring boulder as a result of the city's geographic locality and the ingenuity of those who built it. She incorporates almost weightless boulders that play with the idea of gravity in unlikely locations throughout the urban environment such as restaurants and other public places and leads you to the pavilion whilst at the same time invoking a sense of déjà-vu.

At the United States Pavilion, more of these paper covered polystyrene boulders are seen, but more strikingly a mismatch of objects overflow from the front of the pavilion blurring the boundaries of the internal and external environments of the show. Moreover the main entrance being thwarted in favour of a side door immediately leads to the disorientation of the viewer and a disruption of the perception of space.

In thermodynamics, the 'Triple Point' denotes the point of temperature and pressure at which a substance is able to exist in a perfect equilibrium, be it gas, liquid, or solid, and it is from here that Sze has taken the title of the show. This therefore gives reference to the fragility and difficulty of obtaining a balance and in particular the constant ambition of both the artist and, in a broader sense, society to create stability.

As mentioned previously, Sze is predominantly a site-specific artist, and these ideas of stability and fragility are particularly thought-provoking within the context of Venice. The routes are driven by water, which has the force and effortless ability to erode the land and its buildings. The stilts which support the ancient buildings of the city are in constant need of attention in order to keep them in standing order, to keep the city and water in equilibrium. Therefore Sze is able to use the precarious nature of the city and the pavilion's surroundings in order to accentuate the meaning of her work.

Another key theme to the exhibition is the idea of the 'compass' and the yearning to be able to locate ourselves in an existence which is often disorienting. The show consists of six spaces, with each acting as an experimental site where objects attempt to become devices or assemblages that aim to model or measure the universe. Therefore the aspiration to model the complexity and the near impossibility of this task is highly evident in each of the individual rooms of *Triple Point*.

The first room inside the pavilion is accessed through the side door thus immediately throwing the viewers' internal compass out of orientation. Atop a faux compass rose, marked out on the floor in black tape a sprawling installation suggestive of a planetarium is constructed out of various found objects including cards for testing colour blindness, paint cans and tree branches which sprout from industrial clips in order to form a sphere which is evocative of a planet. The navigation of this large amount of material at a fast pace leads to an experience in the first room that is reminiscent of the effort of trying to locate ourselves in our own

world, something which Sze believes is an important aspect part of the experience of everyday life.

In each room, the viewer oscillates between seeing the work as arranged time and space and organised hoarding with the small details of the work often dissipating in order to be appreciated as one monumental structure. The objects which grow like an 'abnormal garden attempting to merge with architecture and geometrical data' seem to have a life of their own, with fans not being used to quash the stifling heat of Venice but instead to recreate the impression of unpredictable natural movement, such as the fluttering of leaves in a breeze.

Perhaps the most eye-catching space of the exhibition is the final room with the ceiling made to feel lowered and impending by geometrically patterned chords that act like a sunk solid structure. This once again plays on this idea of an in-between space, which leaves the viewer in limbo, unable to place a hold on what is a reality in both the environment of the pavilion and also in everyday life. To add to this the glass window (a 1970s addition to the pavilion which is often boarded up) allows Sze to create an in-between space that makes the interior continuous with the exterior, with rocks and vaporetto tickets from outside the pavilion being placed inside as well as indoor objects similar to those found within the exhibition seemingly spilling out into the courtyard. This porous border therefore brings the viewer full circle having begun with confusion of direction and the disruption of space; they end in the same way.

On top of all of the aforementioned themes and ideas of the show which the artist aims to induce, the artwork also has the capacity to move away from the American tradition of grandiose idealism in favour of experimentation and uncertainty. This therefore resonates the ideals of the artist and the pavilion softly radiates a feeling that we are still becoming but at the same time still trying to figure it all out.

Tom Petrides



Ali Kazma, *Resistance*, 2013, installation view

Turkish Pavilion Venice Biennale 2013

The 55th Venice Biennale once again showcases many interesting artists and artworks from different countries. Most of the national pavilions are located in the Giardini and the Arsenale, while the large group exhibition of the biennale, the *Encyclopedic Palace*, also continues in both sites. Massimiliano Gioni, curator of the main group exhibition, has structured the 'Encyclopedic Palace' around a utopic model that investigates varying approaches to knowledge and the archive from both past and present. Curating the Turkish Pavilion within the 'encyclopedic' framing of this year's biennale, Emre Baykal adequately chose a contemporary video artist, Ali Kazma, to represent Turkey.

Ali Kazma is one of the internationally acclaimed Turkish contemporary artists. His practice is mostly centered on video works that question and document different human behaviors, their movements and existence methods. Born in 1971, Kazma received his MA from The New School in New York, where he also worked as a teaching assistant. Of the numerous awards he has received, the two most prominent are the Unesco Award for the promotion of the arts in 2001 and Nam June Paik media award in 2010.

The Hirshhorn Museum in Washington D.C. hosted a solo exhibition of his work for the first time in United States in 2012, and last month, in June 2013, he was named one of the 'most collectible artists' in Art and Auction magazine. As one of the most challenging and well-known Turkish artists, his practice is both interesting and relevant for representing Turkey this year.

Kazma's exhibition, titled *Resistance*, is a series of 13 video works that were produced in 2012 and 2013. The videos are shown on five large screens without being synched, allowing visitors to experience the works in a different way each time they walk in. The artist is interested in investigating the body and uses situations from every day events to demonstrate how human bodies can be limited and free at the same time. The *Resistance* series can be seen as a continuation of his earlier video work *Obstructions* from 2005 that serves as a critique of human labor and production. Kazma is highly conscious of political, scientific and cultural events that shape a society. *Resistance*, similarly to *Obstructions*, investigates human production; however, with the new series, the focus is on the body and its shaping of society.

“Against everything being exchanged with each other, body remains that which cannot be exchanged”

–Ali Kazma

During a year long documentation process for the *Resistance* series, Kazma used various cities and spaces to shoot his videos. If watched carefully, the videos contain some repetitive imagery, action and sounds to reference the similarities of different situations. For example, *Skin* is a main theme and is put in focus in most of the videos including the *Tattoo* and *Bodybuilding*. The significance of showing skin in his videos comes from his critique of the body's limits where skin is a layer that separates the inner body from the outer; it is a metaphor for the fragile boundary between life and death.

Bodies' boundaries shift in the eighteenth century through the emergence of medicine that provides knowledge of anatomical changes. The book *Skin*, written by German academician Claudia Benthien discusses the importance of *Skin* in relation to self and to the world, and it delivers an insightful account of the shift that happened to the body's significance in the Western world. As she explains in her book; 'In contemporary art, the surface of the body is defined as a projection surface and a fetish, a place of wound and stigmatization, an individual dress or a cover to be modified.' Similarly, in *Resistance* Kazma uses body imagery and investigates two different perspectives of the *Skin*: that of the surface, the protective layer of the skin that serves as an architectural component that wraps up the body and that of under the skin.

Tattoo has a lot of detailed close ups to draw attention to the process of tattooing on the skin surface. Kazma is not afraid of showing uneasy scenes in his videos, particularly while bodies are being altered and physical limits tested. In the video *Tattoo*, he shows the moment when the needle enters the *skin* and it bleeds, and the intervention being done to the body is shown in great detail.

Another common message shared by all his videos is the transformation of these bodies. Like in getting a tattoo, the video *Bodybuilding* depicts situations where people build up their bodies with heavy weights. Similar to covering a body with tattoos, with bodybuilding people choose to alter their appearance by constructing a new physic. In terms of getting under the skin, the video *Eye* is a great example. Using close ups, Kazma documents in detail medical processes performed on the retina layer of the eye, and reveals that man-made procedures can help bodies 'resist' to some extent.

Overall, Ali Kazma's exhibition, *Resistance* is a striking show that offers a challenging critique of the body's current condition in urban contexts. As the artist revealed during an interview at the opening, the *Resistance* series show situations of bodily 'resistance' to cultural, scientific and aesthetic limits, whilst everything can be exchanged in today's society. Additionally, since it has been recently announced that Turkey will have a permanent space in the 56th Venice Biennale at the Arsenale, we can look forward to more fascinating artists and artworks to represent the Turkish Pavillion in the future.

Asli Hatipoglu

Image courtesy of Roman Mensing

Canadian Pavillion: Shary Boyle's *Music for Silence*

For the fifty-fifth Venice Biennale 2013, Shary Boyle has transformed the nautilus shaped Canadian Pavilion into a cave of solitude, silence, and isolation. In Boyle's interview with Robert Enright and Meeka Walsh featured in *Border Crossings*, a contemporary Canadian art magazine, she stated her aspirations for this exhibition, *Music for Silence*, were to create a place of refuge for the thousands of Biennale visitors who may become overwhelmed by the spectacle of the whole event. However, while *Music for Silence* is a good place to escape the Venetian summer sun, thanks to the extra air-conditioning that mimics the cool temperatures of a cave, the exhibition itself is one of the more unimaginative and less captivating displays within the Giardini di Castello. In my view it is also one of Boyle's less successful exhibitions primarily due to lack of evidence of thought put into the exhibition, specifically in regards to its spatial design, collaboration with the artist, and arrangement of artworks to best communicate themes and concepts.

Shary Boyle is a Canadian born artist and a graduate of the Ontario College of Art & Design, Toronto. She is the winner of The Gershon Iskowitz Prize 2009 at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; the museum which also housed her mid-career retrospective, *Flesh & Blood* in 2010. Her artwork is in the collection of The National Art Gallery of Canada, Paisley Museum of Art in Scotland, and *La Maison Rouge Fondation Antoine De Galbert* in Paris, amongst others.

Boyle's multidisciplinary practice incorporates a variety of media: from drawing, painting and ceramics to installation and performance. Her design concept for the Canadian



Onus Opus, 2012, Porcelain, glaze, lustre, vintage turntable, vinyl record, timer sequencer, 51 × 41 × 41 cm

Pavilion was to feminize and alter the existing space, which in her opinion is characteristic of its construction in 1958; a time when painting dominated the art world. She has been able to do so with the help of Josée Drouin-Brisebois, the Curator of Contemporary Art at the National Gallery of Canada.

The exhibition consists of a bronze sentry, three porcelain figures placed on vinyl record players, a 16mm film, and an installation titled *The Cave Painter* 2013. Inside the Canadian Pavilion the audience is confronted with issues of feminism, other social concerns of humanity and various psychological states. These form a thematic link between artworks. Elements of folk, the hand-made, and strange mythical-like creatures influence and construct the basis of Boyle's aesthetic language.

The title, *Music for Silence*, relates to the creative process Boyle underwent as she contemplated how one could become inspired or moved by a song. She equates this feeling to the process of experiencing art, "with trust in perception and intelligence of feeling." However, there are no acoustics audible in the exhibition. There is only the suggestion of sound or a voice as seen in *Silent Dedication* 2013.



Silent Dedication 2013 is an unobtrusive, silent, black and white 16mm film. The woman featured has dominant eyes, cheekbones, nose and mouth that define her small but angular face, which is delicately lined with overlapping wrinkles. Her hair is braided around her forehead. Her hands are aged and plump. Her pale complexion stands out in stark contrast to her clothing that blends into the somber black background. Her identity is a mystery, and so is what she is trying to communicate, unless you can understand sign language of course. The accompanying exhibition pamphlet is the only translated script of the old woman's silent speech as there are no subtitles in the film, nor wall tags in the Pavilion. Thus, without reading this pamphlet and watching the film, it is hard to decipher Boyle's intentions for the exhibition: 'to give a voice to those who have been silenced or those who have none, yet, without speaking on their behalf.'

Despite the fact that all the artworks in *Music for Silence* were produced specifically for this year's Venice Biennale, they appear as if Josée Drouin-Brisebois selected them from Boyle's oeuvre. It can be argued that the three porcelain figures placed on top of vintage turntables evoke ideas of resistance and resilience as the humans carry the weight of the large planets. Additionally in *The Cave Painter 2013*, the mermaid with suckling child at her breast, have images of people and creatures projected onto her. At first the figures in the projection seem like they could be of iconic social activists but on closer inspection it becomes evident they are just anonymous illustrations. None of these, both the sculptures and illustrations in the installation, appear as if they want to communicate something to us or have been silenced. Instead they look like emblems of hope and perseverance or that of existential hopelessness. These ideas are thus at odds with silent *Silent Dedication 2013*.

The physical exhibition design of the Canadian Pavilion was also poorly composed. As this was Josée Drouin-Brisebois's second year curating an exhibition in the venue obvious difficulties and limitations within the small and circular space were not addressed. The placement of objects was too linear as they appeared to be grouped by medium.

This, thus, limited the dialogue to one focused primarily on media. Also, the exhibition route does not bode well to large groups of visitors who clogged its flow because the artworks cannot be viewed from a variety of angles. This resulted in the Pavilion feeling claustrophobic, which unfortunately defeated Boyle's intentions of creating a space of solitude.

Finally, *Ophiodea 2013*, the bronze sentry seated above the Pavilion's entrance is a nice touch to catch those passing by and welcome the audience into the cave, however it does not appear to add any value to the exhibition.

Even though this year's Canadian Pavilion disappointed me, I would not discourage people from visiting the site. I believe Boyle is still a noteworthy contemporary Canadian artist who has the potential and ability to redeem herself from the Venice Biennale and to reach an international audience in a more powerful, inventive and eclectic manner.

Misha Michael

*On Opposite Page:
Silent Dedication, 2013
Written, directed and art directed by Shary Boyle.
Translated and performed by Beth Hutchison.
Filmed and processed by John Price, Black and
white 16mm film, looper, 2:45 min.*

*All images courtesy of the artist and
Jessica Bradley Gallery, Toronto.*

An Enclave of a Different Colour

Bubblegum pink is not typically the dominant colour found in the landscape. However, when visiting Richard Mosse's *The Enclave* (2013), mountains, grassy fields, and jungle trees all take on a magenta hue. The Irish pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale welcomes the viewer by three large-scale landscape photographs, in which the mountains take on the seemingly unnatural shade of pink. The images are immediately appealing; however, you might want to turn the corner and watch the six-screen film installation before you start planning your next vacation.

The Enclave serves as a type of culmination to Mosse's three-year journey in the Congo. For those familiar with Mosse's practice, the photographs are quite similar to his most recent body of work, *Infra*. Between 2010-2011, Mosse visited eastern Congo and photographed various groups using Aerochrome, a type of infrared film that was discontinued by Kodak in 2009. This film was originally developed by the US military to detect camouflage during WWII. The current project, including the film, was also shot using infrared technology.

The film, which is the main body of the installation, was a collaborative effort between cinematographer Trevor Tweeten and composer Ben Frost that began in 2012. Mosse has previously worked with Tweeten on such projects as *Untitled (Iraq)* and *Leviathan*. Together, Mosse and his team, including both Tweeten and Frost, visited various remote rebel groups in the Congo in order to collect footage. The film provides an unsettling balance between beautiful landscape and harsh existence of life in the Congo. While the viewer never experiences direct combat, its essence looms through the raised guns of a rebel group waiting along a riverbed, or through the somber crowd that gathers around dead bodies brought to a village after a nearby massacre.

The installation of screens surrounds the viewer as the minimalist soundtrack creates an uncertain tension. Different sequences project on each individual screen and tend to be a balance between the landscape and scenes within the villages, or tracking a rebel group. Despite some violent and disturbing imagery, the well-edited sequencing maintains the viewer's interest. If ever an event is too graphic, the viewer can shift their gaze to another scene: a calming view of waves com-

ing ashore, or the leafy pink foliage of the jungle.

One particular sequence follows a young rebel soldier through an endlessly pink field. The scene cuts and the same soldier stares unflinchingly into the lens of the camera as he holds a gun against his shoulder, confronting the viewer. He is merely a boy, not a terrifying soldier or a person one would imagine to be a killer. Elsewhere, on one screen of the installation, a group of villagers are seen standing stoically above dead bodies, while another screen simultaneously reveals a rebel group posed to shoot at seemingly nothing. This type of footage gives the film a staged quality. In a video for Frieze, Mosse commented on how the people they filmed had an interesting reaction to the camera. He described them as being ambivalent yet deeply defiant towards the camera, stating that they became very gestural and performative. From the participants' gaze and actions, it is clear they are exaggerating their perceived role for the camera. Although it can be questioned how much direction the participants received, their performative and often confrontational demeanor challenges the viewer to debate the documentary nature of the work and the narrative Mosse unravels.

Together, the photographs and film serve both to educate the viewer about the conflict and generate a number of questions. What is truly happening in the Congo? How can such horrible things happen in such a beautiful place? And how do we digest the beauty alongside the human suffering? This questioning of beauty and violence also calls into question the medium of photography itself and its role as a technological, documentary, journalistic, and artistic tool. The work has elements of reportage, and the subject matter is one that is familiarly covered by photojournalists. However, Mosse is clearly aestheticizing the landscape, not only by manipulating colour, but also in his sweeping landscape shots, and his deliberate avoidance of capturing a violent event. He uses a large format camera, something that takes longer to set up and position, in place of the more standard Leica. By pairing the individual photographs along with the video, there is a suggestion of the potential limits of the photograph in its specificity. However, the film borders on the theatrical, which could, arguably, detract from the project. That bordering and play on vision and perception is part of the works' purpose.

The colour is perhaps what is most challenging to adjust to in this project, and inspires the contemplative nature of the installation. The saturation of pink creates a kind of alternate world. In his description, Mosse ponders the influence of colour (such as pink) on the perceived authenticity of a photograph. 'How much more constructed is a pink photograph versus a black and white photograph...yet a black and white photograph can represent Truth [with a capital T].' It is a valid question, one I had not considered. Why do we think of Mosse's photographs as surreal if a black and white photograph shows the world in an equally skewed range of colour? Mosse cleverly creates contrasts in order to inspire the viewer with a variety of dilemmas that do not have immediate conclusions but a more permanent contemplation.

The Congo may seem very distant and different from Ireland, but the imagery strikes a familiar chord on a more global level. Even if the viewer is not informed in regards to the situation in the Congo, they are likely to be familiar with other areas of conflict; and for those living in Ireland, they are like to be better versed in regards to the conflict that continues in Northern Ireland and receives little media attention worldwide.

While Mosse is trying to bring awareness to the plight of the Congo, his work also brings to bear the unseen wars that continue to exist across the world. Problems exist from the microcosm to the macrocosm, lurking in the tall grass, dark forests, or even out in the open. Sometimes you just have to alter the colour of the landscape to change your perception. Who knew the colour pink could provoke such thoughts?

Esther Kendall



The garden of delights, engraved granite and iron rebar, 2013.

Mladen Miljanović

The Garden of Delights

For the first time in 10 years and the second time overall, Bosnia and Herzegovina is present at the Venice Biennale, with an off-set pavilion at Palazzo Malipiero. For a long time, the country's participation in 2003 remained a one-off; after that, those in charge of deciding on the country's involvement with international art exhibitions could not reach agreement, condemning the Bosnian art scene to be left out of the international dialogue. The current project therefore embodies and represents an important accord between long dissenting voices. It is in fact co-curated by Sarita Vujković and Irfan Hošić, the representatives of the two different political entities which make up Bosnia Herzegovina: the Srpska Republic and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The artist selected to represent the country is Mladen Miljanović (b.1981), a former lieutenant in the army, and now one of the youngest artists of the War Generation. Well aware of the weight of this responsibility,

he decided to openly engage with this theme through the opening piece of the show, a large engraved black granite slab, the remainder of a performance he enacted during the opening of the exhibition, *The Pressure of Wishes*. Months before the show he texted thirty friends asking: "Dear friend, what would you love or wish to see in the Pavilion of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Venice?". He engraved the answers on the stone as he received them. Later, for the actual performance, he stood for the entire duration of the opening holding the slab in his hands, literally bearing the burden of desires. Miljanović also exploited the concept of the pressure of expectations and judgement that the artist has to face for his artistic production through *At the edge* (2012), another performance in which he hung on the outside wall of the building in which an exhibition of his works was hosted. He remained suspended in the void, just holding tight with his hands for more than an hour during the opening.

With *The Pressure of Wishes*, he goes beyond the personal dimension of bearing pressure by taking on the role of a representative of society, giving him an almost social function. The delicate task of giving shape to the different voices of this country, and dealing with the balancing of individual differences in a collective community is a theme that runs through the show as a red thread.

The requests that we can read on the stone mainly record the desire not to see any more works related to the war, of freeing Bosnian identity from the stereotype of a suffering country. The artist rejects the self-piteous attitude in which Bosnian culture has been immersed since the Nineties, but the war is indeed an absence-presence here, something that we still cannot lose sight of when engaging with the Balkans. Conceived as a reaction, Miljanović wants to show the complete opposite, how people are a lively force with desires, but with a bitter note of warning – individual desires and wishes, when do they become a collective absurdity?

The question of the plurality of voices is addressed in the powerful piece *A Sweet Symphony of Absurdity*, a five-minute video starring Banja Luka's Philharmonic Orchestra. The video opens with a scene showing empty anonymous grassland when a flutist enters and starts playing a melody. After ten seconds, another musician joins her and starts playing a different tune. Gradually every ten seconds another member joins, until twenty-five musicians fill the screen; each one playing his own favourite melody and the music that was so singularly harmonious becomes an increasingly chaotic noise. Then suddenly they all stop and break the fourth wall: they look at the viewer, as if they were waiting for applause or somehow challenging the spectator, waiting to see his reaction in facing this collective absurdity.



The pressure of wishes, performance, May 30, 2013.

In the main piece, a triptych inspired by Hieronymus Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (c.1500), the artist keeps the master's landscape and substitutes the human figures with kitschy images that people in the central Balkans have chosen to represent themselves on their gravestone. It is a Balkan tradition to have an image of the dead person on their gravestone to represent them for eternity. Before enrolling at the Academy of Art, Miljanović was a gravestone engraver, and he received the weirdest requests from people about what to engrave, leading him to read this image as the quintessence of their desires. The triptych shows an encyclopaedic array of people, a collective portrait using the metaphor of Bosnia as a diverse garden where individuals have their own multiple desires and vices, which then become a torture to the community. The piece is matched with a documentary slideshow of the original photos the artist took of the tombstones, with his own image visible as a reflection on the surface while shooting. This operation has a somewhat didactic taste, as does an extensive sort of mind map that the artist has drawn on the walls of the room with notes on the themes stressed in the exhibition. This explanatory gesture seems out of place, and one could be inclined to interpret it as a sign of provincial naivety, or of a culturally learned fear of misreading, or simply an instructive attitude. Miljanović is in fact a teacher at the Banja Luka Academy of Art and his whole practice is charged with a social value, an attempt at shaping culture rather than being shaped. He believes that art can propel society to take action and shape the spirit of the time. In his personal experience he engages with activities in which art is a tool for social integration between the three ethnic communities of Bosnia (like *Happening 'Balkana'*, 2005) and helps people to break geographic and cultural barriers. Numerous are the similarities with the figure of Joseph Beuys, one thinks: he was a soldier, now artist and teacher active in pro-

moting societal change and dialogue in the community, also dealing with a post war country undergoing reconstruction, constantly confronted with a heavy past and turning to art for its cathartic and purifying value.

Thus far, Miljanović seems to still be developing his mature language. His careful juxtaposition of, on the one hand, materials derived from craft tradition and the rural world – rusty iron rebars, granite, and engraving techniques and on the other hand, a confident use of video and performance, exemplify his uniqueness. He appears to be aware of and even take pride in this idiosyncratic combination of certain features deeply rooted in his native culture, alongside an updated artistic language. Whether this interesting young artist will acquire any success on the broad international scene remains to be seen.

Caterina Mestrovich

All images courtesy of the artist

Re-staging ideas or “When Attitudes Become Form: Bern 1969/Venice 2013”

Forty-four years after its inception at the Kunsthalle in Bern, *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form*, Harald Szeemann’s seminal conceptual art exhibition, is being brought back to life by the Prada Foundation at Ca’ Corner de la Regina, a historical Venetian palace, for the duration of the 55th Biennale. Curated by Arte Povera specialist and director of the Prada Foundation, Germano Celant, the exhibition’s original space was recreated by architect Rem Koolhaas in collaboration with artist and photographer Thomas Demand.

The exercise is one of meticulous precision: almost all the artworks exhibited in 1969, including the site-specific ones, are present and exhibited in exactly the same location they were in when on show in Bern. The majority are originals, most of the other ones reproductions or re-enactments. Those few that are absent are marked by their outlines on walls and floors and accompanied by a photograph. Walls and their wood elements, floors, doors and windows, even the radiators of the Kunsthalle – everything has been reconstructed down to the smallest detail. Yet, there are no ceilings and the superimposition of two spaces yields views of frescoed walls, pillars and the *palazzo’s* historical *plafonds*, reminding us that we find ourselves in a space that has been torn out of its original place and time and transplanted somewhere else. But it is not just a “space”. The curator has detached and grafted an entire “world” onto a drastically different body.

Celant sees this very act of complete extraction as having turned the historical exhibition into a readymade, an object. This reinvention, able to trigger new ideas and allow for new associations, confers “When Attitudes Become Form” a materiality that had until now played little role in its perception. And that is precisely why it feels somewhat odd that this particular exhibition has been chosen for re-staging.

When Harald Szeemann conceived the show in 1968, his aim was to present radically new art forms whose similarities were less stylistic than intellectual and which distinguished themselves through concepts and processes rather than artefacts. These art forms were later named



Lawrence Weiner executing “A 36” x 36” Removal to the lathing or support wall of plaster or wallboard from a wall” at the Kunsthalle in Bern 1969

Process Art, Land Art, Arte Povera, Conceptual Art and so forth. Szeemann gathered a sizeable and varied group of artists in Bern: Jannis Kounellis, Mario Merz, Eva Hesse, Lawrence Weiner, Walter De Maria, Richard Artschwager, Joseph Kosuth and Doug Huebler as well as Joseph Beuys, Richard Long, Carl Andre, Robert Smithson and Sol LeWitt, to name a few. He engaged them in a dialectical encounter during which they experimented with new approaches to art and architecture.

Documentary videos and interviews screened at ground floor level at Ca’ Corner della Regina bear testimony to the exceptional atmosphere at the Kunsthalle in those days.



When Attitudes Become Form, Venice Biennale 2013, (Installation Views)

One watches Weiner hammer plaster off a wall, Artschwager talk about the *Blps* and Beuys smear margarine into a corner of the building. There was a lot of thinking, debating and collaborating as well as a great deal of time spent “making things”. The whole endeavour was oozing with life that still filled the air when the exhibition opened to the public.

Exhibitions appear at a particular moment and are designed to answer to a certain set of specific historical conditions. For conceptual and other ‘formless’ art forms that emerged at the end of the 1960s, Szeemann’s show responded successfully in various ways, despite the initial sense of bafflement it generated. Given its pioneering character for artists, curator and public alike,

it took a while until the ideas caught on. Over time, it contributed to calling into question the boundaries of what Szeemann called “the triangle in which art operates”, namely the artist’s studio, the gallery and the museum. In addition to challenging traditional attributes of aesthetic form, it demonstrated a new approach to art, where everything was left to the liberating process of doing, where random order and chance governed much of the process and where the unimpeded participation of the viewer catered to a continuous evolution of the artworks. In doing this, it established a sense of supremacy of concept over object.

What then does the 2013 version of *When Attitudes Become Form* do? Its newly-acquired status of readymade makes it a fragment of times past, both as an entity as well as a collection of artefacts. We are thus, in contrast to one of Szeemann’s original intentions, very much back in a classical museum setting. It allows us to appreciate the materiality of objects that embody the ideas of the conceptual generation, with the scrupulous reconstruction of the setting creating a privileged visual experience. This is likely the major attraction of the exhibition – with Conceptual Art now an established category in the canon of the history of art, these fragments are quite interesting, if only to feed our curiosity as to what the “art of ideas” looks like. From that perspective, one could generously argue that the exhibition’s 2013 version complements the 1969 version curatorially, by making the artworks enter into a new dialogue with visitors. But an afterthought remains: did Celant, consciously or not, play on the theme of fetishization of the object, thereby negating Szeemann’s fundamental intentions? Cynics would be quick to point out that this exhibition, backed by luxury goods label Prada, could be seen as yet another, this time vastly more intellectual merchandising venture.

With plenty of emerging artistic talent around, one wonders why the Prada Foundation did not dare stage an exhibition of up-and-coming artists. This would have infused Ca’ Corner della Regina with vitality and life and thus constituted a much more fitting *hommage* to Szeemann.

Isabelle Nowak

Artworks featured in photographs:

Opposite Page, top:

Alan Saret, *Zinc Fire* (1968/2013) – Unpainted wire, 75 x 120 x 90 cm

Gary B. Kuehn, *Untitled (Wedge Piece)* (1968) – Wood, fiberglass, enamel, 35.6 × 198.1 × 116.8 cm

Bill Bollinger, *Rope Piece* (1969/2011) – Manila rope, clamps, eye bolts, black tape, rope: 1.3 cm diameter, length may vary between 500 and 1,000 cm

Gary B. Kuehn, *Pedestal Piece (Untitled)* (1968) – Wood, fiberglass, enamel, 103.2 × 96.5 x 40.6 cm

Eva Hesse, *Augment* (1968) – Latex, canvas, 17 elements, 198.1 × 101.6 cm each

Bill Bollinger, *Pipe Piece* (1968) – Aluminium pipes, plastic, pipes: 200 cm length, 5 cm diameter, angle variable

Walter De Maria, *Art By Telephone* (1967) – Telephone, sheet of paper, variable dimensions

Rainer Ruthenbeck, *Aschenhaufen III* (1968) – Ashes, wire, 92 iron sticks, approx. 80 cm height; 220 cm diameter

Richard Tuttle, *Canvas Dark Blue* (1967) – Dyed canvas, thread, 177.8 x 90.2 cm

Opposite Page, bottom:

Alan Saret, *Zinc Fire* (1968/2013) – Unpainted wire, 75 x 120 x 90 cm

Gary B. Kuehn, *Untitled (Wedge Piece)* (1968) – Wood, fiberglass, enamel, 35.6 × 198.1 × 116.8 cm

Walter De Maria, *Art By Telephone* (1967) – Telephone, sheet of paper, variable dimensions

Gary B. Kuehn, *Pedestal Piece (Untitled)* (1968) – Wood, fiberglass, enamel, 103.2 × 96.5 x 40.6 cm

Richard Artschwager, *Blp* (1968) – Spray paint, spray paint on rubberized hair, oil-based enamel on wood, various dimensions

Eva Hesse, *Vinculum II* (1969) – Latex on wire mesh, wire, staples, string, 16 ‘ x 3”

Markus Raetz, *Endpunkt B and Endpunkt A* (1969) – Iron, 4 × 30 × 30 cm each

*Lawrence Weiner Image photo by Shunk Kender, courtesy Harald Szeemann Archive, Switzerland
Installation images Courtesy Mousse Magazine*





*The Dining Room (Francis Place), 1997, C-type print on aluminium,
150 x 150 cm*

Artist Feature: Sarah Jones

As you lay on the plush couch across from the psychoanalyst with his pad of paper, you become aware of a third person observing in the room. However, this person is not physically present. Rather, he or she is conceptualised; a bodiless ubiquity existing as a support, to grasp for when discussing your innermost thoughts.

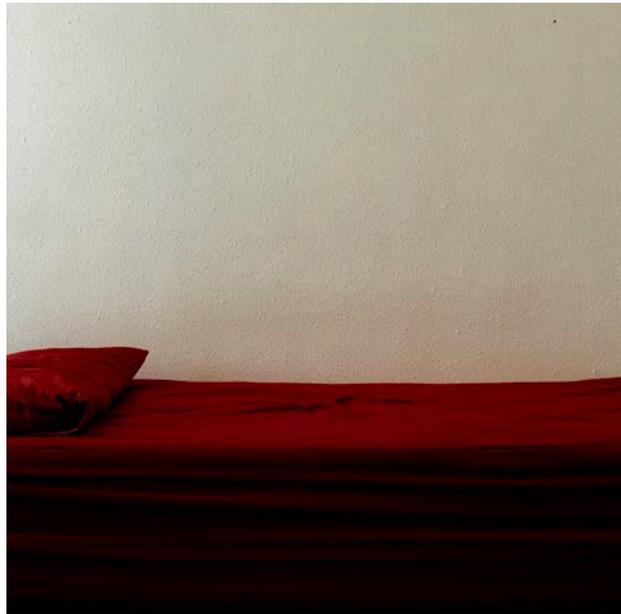
The camera of artist Sarah Jones takes on the role of this third person. Sitting at eye level of the psychoanalyst, the camera acts as a physical marker for the first person witness of the therapy session. But the resulting photograph is void of any living existence, capturing only the empty couch where many patients have left their impressions. Jones seizes the essence of these sessions and these people through the empty rooms and empty couches. The resulting image, taken with a large format camera and a long exposure, is an eerie room with a dishevelled and empty couch at a 1:1 scale.

Born in 1959, Sarah Jones developed a liking for the photographic medium from an early age, and started taking photographs of therapy rooms in 1996 while studying for her Fine Art MA at Goldsmiths' College. She became interested in these rooms and couches as she explored psychoanalytical theory. One can be certain

that Freud's discussion over the significance of these couches had a great impact on Jones' work, whereby he suggests that lying down facilitates a way to talk 'out of the body', allowing the patient to go deep into the unconscious and release their past. Up until as recently as 2007, Jones continued to take photographs of the couches one finds in therapy rooms.

It is undoubtedly characteristic of Jones' practice to commit to lengthy projects. In 1997, she engaged in another extensive enterprise, this one titled, 'Francis Place/ Mulberry Lodge'. For this series, Jones worked with three adolescent girls, whereby each month over a four-year period, the girls would enact various domestic scenes within a household environment. These scenes however, demonstrate abstract qualities in the depiction of the girls, as they seldom interact and never engage in eye contact with each other. The viewer can sense some tension in the photograph as their faces remain emotionless. Nevertheless, such portrayal exudes a staged presence.

At the beginning of the project, Jones would orchestrate the settings herself, including the dressing and positioning of the girls. However, as the work progressed and the girls became more familiar with the



Analyst (Couch) (I), 2007, C-type Print, 122 x 122 cm

work, they were increasingly involved in the process, choosing their own wardrobe and suggesting various positions and scenarios. It became hard to decipher whether the girls were acting out adolescence or just being themselves, an act of performative realism.

The domestic settings that Jones chose acted as a container for the scene. As the girls grew older their reaction to the house and their environment began to change. They developed an animalistic reaction to the house, acting out wild encounters with the physical environment. One interpretation has been as they matured they recreated childish behaviours interpreted as a re-enactment of childish things. Their homes became cages from which they dreamed of escaping. Jones ended the series when the girls left home.

In 2002 the subjects of Jones' photographs evolved from the adolescent girls to adult life models. The model became the subject of a portrait, she removed the model from the pedestal and placed her in her own surroundings. Jones took photographs of life models inside their own homes, mostly on their beds. In their own environment they are able to rest, Jones believes this is when the model shows their true selves. Jones made it her goal to capture this state of rest and she was able to capture the essence of the model within their own living spaces, the best portrait.

Jones works in a large scale that is reminiscent of the Edward Hopper. She draws inspiration from Hopper paintings and paintings of the Renaissance. She looks at the depiction of perspective and distance in Renaissance paintings. She employs in her photography the

use of the colour blue to add depth to the image and uses mathematics to configure compositions.

In her earlier works Jones relied on natural light, or the light provided to create an image that was often flooded by light. In her later practices she employed studio lights to create the scene she wanted. The resulting work is about the state of being, where everything is about the stillness of the image. Her analogue photographs have very little post production as she pays very close attention to detail as she takes the photograph.

Sarah Jones is currently represented by the Maureen Paley gallery in London, and has exhibited five solo shows at the venue since 1987. She has also taken part in a number of group exhibitions, most notably "Seduced by Art: Photography Past and Present" at the National Gallery in London. Elsewhere, Jones was Artist in Residence at the Hayward Gallery and Yaddo Artist's Colony in 1997 and 2008 respectively. Her work can be found in many renowned collections worldwide, including the Saatchi Collection, Tate Gallery, the Goetz Collection, and Tishman Speyer Properties.

Kali McMillan

*All images copyright the artist.
Courtesy of Maureen Paley, London*

Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2013

This year's pavilion is designed by the multi-award winning architect Sou Fujimoto. Fujimoto is already the fourth Japanese architect to fulfil the role of designing the Serpentine's summer pavilion, following his predecessors Toyo Ito in 2002, and Kazuyo Sejima in partnership with Ryue Nishizawa in 2009. Aged only 41, he is the youngest architect ever to design the annual pavilion (noticeably, young and thriving minds seem particularly `en vogue` in 2013; after Massimiliano Gioni, who holds the honour of being the youngest artistic director to curate this year's Venice Biennale, Sou Fujimoto is in appropriate company). To date, Fujimoto has had a soaring career: little more than ten years ago, in the year 2000, he founded his own company, `Sou Fujimoto Architects` and instantly began to receive awards, some of which he has won as many as three times in a row. Owing to the fact that he is architecture's man of the hour, and since it appears that at present there is no other architect as gifted as Sou Fujimoto, it is unsurprising that he has been invited to design the pavilion at the Serpentine Gallery.

Fujimoto's artistic aim is to reshape our experience as well as understanding of the relationship between architectural spaces and their immediate surroundings; either natural or man-made.

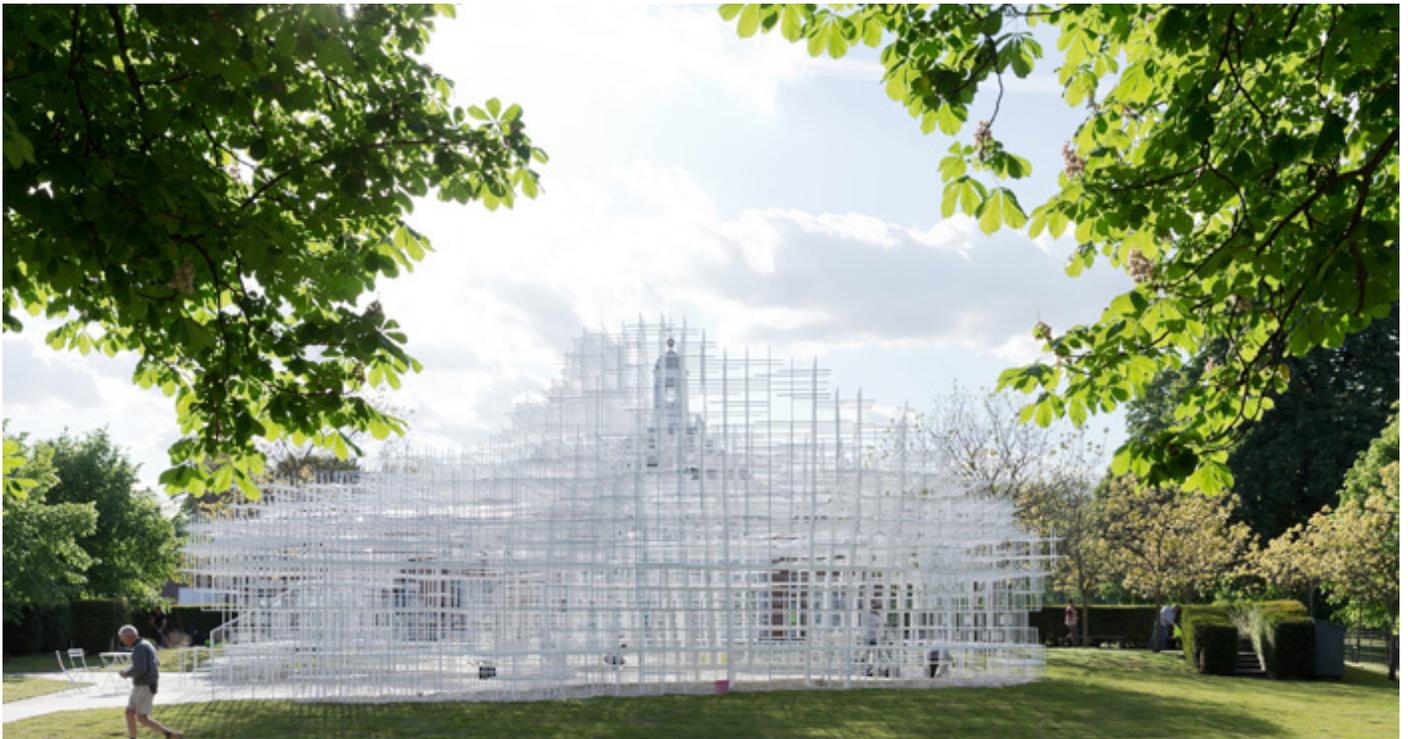
He often achieves this by designing organic forms, which are intended to be familiar, as they imitate our natural environment. Moreover, Fujimoto aims for a playful and almost therapeutic interaction between the user and the space, which seems to highlight his belief that architecture has the ability to drastically improve our lives.

The Serpentine Gallery is a unique institution where art can be encountered in relation to nature, and as such acts as the ideal location for Fujimoto to, potentially, realize his most significant project to date outside of Japan, whilst simultaneously introducing his refreshing concepts around how the buildings of the future may be approached.

The thirteenth pavilion of the Serpentine Gallery is made up of a series of interlocking steel poles and glass plates, creating a light and transparent appearance. Thus, the building is see-through and one is able to perceive the natural environment in the backdrop, through the structure. Sou Fujimoto's notion with his pavilion design seems to have been to create an alliance between traditional Japanese and modern architecture (many architects have tried and failed to balance this tension-filled relationship). Staying true and consistent with tradition, his ideal lies in `emptiness` and the concept of allowing the external into the internal (traditionally, this is achieved through the use of sliding doors). Owing to a desire to dissolve the boundaries between interior and exterior, Fujimoto pared down all the other architectural components, leaving just the load-bearing structure of the building. As a result, the structure determines the overall design and vice versa.

Moreover, the structure is inspired by traditional timber constructions; however, whilst traditional architects would exclusively make use of natural materials, such as bamboo and wood, Fujimoto opted for steel. It is at this specific point that he parts with tradition in favour of modernity: Seemingly, had he used wood, the pavilion would have become `one` with the organic terrain. Nevertheless, owing to the lightweight characteristics of steel and given the fact that the steel is also dyed white, the building appears cloud-like, rather than being reminiscent of an organic structure. Noticeably, the elements of clouds and summer pavilions in relation to Fujimoto's structure seem to draw allusions to *Cloud City* by Tomás Saraceno, which was installed in the roof garden of the Metropolitan Museum in New York in 2012. Similarly, the pavilion by Saraceno aimed to expand one's experience of the natural environment.

On the other hand, unlike *Cloud City*, which only allowed in 15 visitors with timed tick-



Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2013

ets, the Serpentine pavilion acts as a social location and should not be encountered only in isolation but also experienced in company. Hence, there is no need to rush through Fujimoto`s structure, and actually it encourages visitors to linger: Whilst a multitude of stepped terraces provide sitting spaces on the outside of the construction, internally the spectator finds a licensed bar (for those of you who need to know), where one is able to sample an array of Japanese beverages.

Fujimoto proposes that his pavilion encourages people to explore the environment within a structure that is neither solely architectural, nor natural, but rather “a new form of environment”. As such, the building allows the spectator to experience and create new relationships with nature through architecture. Ultimately, Sou Fujimoto’s pavilion design for the Serpentine truly is a place where people are able to interact with one another, whilst experiencing and enjoying architecture in its purest form.

Sou Fujimoto’s pavilion at the Serpentine Gallery is on view until the 20th of October 2013. For further information: www.serpentinegallery.org

Philipp Zollinger

Image Courtesy of The Serpentine Gallery, London

Interview with Peter Fraser

Peter Fraser has established himself and set himself apart by embracing the poetic possibilities of colour photography. He has produced an exceptional body of work mostly looking at everyday objects and ordinary things. In describing the driving force behind his practice, Fraser remarks: “It is about a constant desire to touch a notion of the sublime”. The sublime is a very abstract concept that Fraser seems to effortlessly materialise in his photographs.

Fraser’s body of work and unique investigation of the ordinary is even more remarkable and valuable in our time, an age of the democratisation of photography. The age of the iPhone and Facebook, where technological progress makes it almost impossible not to take photographs of our immediate surrounding and experiences. Yet no Facebook page offers much of an insight into our world. It is the opposite, and the overload of snapshots seems to desensitize us, giving us a false sense of familiarity that stops us from really seeing and questioning our surroundings. Reflecting on the present everyday use of photography Fraser remarks: “I feel we live in very interesting times and particularly for photography. The democratisation of the medium through digital photography means that millions, tens of millions of photographs are made every day and are added to the total number of photos made. But certain art works from the past, the works that are considered great, will always have some quality of somehow involving the viewer and



[Untitled] 12 Day Journey, 1984

making them aware that they are a physical conscious entity, with mortality. A great work will always come back to that and nothing is going to change that. I believe that soon enough the wheel will turn full circle and our enjoyment of art and the creative process will come again from a respect to dedication.”

And Fraser certainly knows about dedication, with a career of thirty years. Reflecting on his own experience and evolution in his work Fraser notes: “The more professional you become as a photographer the more self-disciplined you have to be about making the time to make work. There are always many other things to do, such as public speaking, writing, travelling. I dedicate blocks of time to my work, I am going to the Lake District this weekend and I go to the Swiss Alps for two weeks in June to work on my new project, which will be an homage to the importance of mathematics.” He also remarks that: “With experience my editing has become much faster and much more certain. The more complex and challenging your work becomes, as will be my new project, the better one has to be at editing.”

In 1983, Fraser worked on a pivotal project, *Twelve Day Journey*. He took twelve



above [Untitled], *Lost For Words*, 2010
below,[Untitled], *Lost For Words*. 2012

days off, taking himself away from his daily routine, and travelled around taking pictures all day without interruption. Commenting on a photograph depicting a row of a dozen seemingly ordered mugs, Fraser observes: “This photograph was made in a youth hostel. The work is really about the two mugs that are facing on the opposite direction. That was a bit of a gift to me”. Submitting his environment to minute scrutiny, and demonstrating an unusual sensitivity to his immediate surroundings, Fraser reveals unexpected beauty and narrative.

Interestingly, some of the works in this series were shown alongside the works of American photographer William Eggleston, who has had a significant influence on Fraser. Fraser recalls: “William Eggleston was the person I respected and feared the most in the world, and for that reason I knew that I had to confront these emotions so I approached him and spent six to eight weeks working with him in America. Eggleston is a character and one of the few geniuses in photography, and I would not use this term lightly. The single most important things I learnt from working with him was that it was possible to spend your whole life doing colour photography.”

Bringing everyday objects to a new poetic life, Fraser does not solely contemplate these objects, but makes them the starting point of a journey, the key to a story not only of their time but also of our own making, opening doorways to our imagination. He often uses saturated and luminous colours that are generous and become in themselves a kind of gift to the viewer. Marvellous and ethereal, the subjects of his work can sometime become the riches of our own imaginary treasure hunt.

Bringing objects into the fore, I wondered what is Fraser’s position on anthropomorphism; is he dismayed or

fascinated by it? Evoking his body of work *Deep Blue*, Fraser remarks: “I am not so interested in anthropomorphism which equates with a physical resemblance between objects and human. In *Deep Blue* my proposition was that I was making portraits of machines rather than photographing a machine.” In the ‘portraits’ of *Deep Blue*, Fraser was celebrating the machines for their own characteristics, materiality, vitality, and presence. He continued: “In 1997, IBM created a machine that defeated a world chess champion and therefore spoke about recognising the first signs of consciousness. At this time I became interested in the idea of sentient machines. Also in ‘*2001: A Space Odyssey*’ by Stanley Kubrick, there is a scene where the computer HAL can hear the protagonists plot, and it ends up killing one of them. When I saw that scene I was not in disbelief. It seemed very possible to me that it could happen.”

With this work, Fraser is reflecting on, and enacting, our deeply bifold relationship with technology, our attraction to it and our fears of it. This push and pull dynamic underlies innovation and suggests a kind of post-modern conception of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. Far from recounting the banality of machine usage and function, Fraser draws on a variety of influences, and on deeply embedded human dreams, doubts and inventions to bring the uniqueness, singularity and dormant potential of each mechanical object to the fore. What could be overlooked as the dry and inanimate world of mechanical objects, under his lens, takes on notes of magic and wonder. The works are imbued with, and entice nothing less, than a fascination for the machine.

Later in 2008, Fotogallery, Cardiff, commissioned Fraser to undertake a new body of work, this time in Wales. Returning to Wales

after twenty years, his views of the country had changed. With this work Fraser developed a new connection with Welsh culture, a culture he feels is rooted in a kind of communal history and way of life. He says: “When I left Wales I was struck by the lack of ambition amongst Welsh people and revisiting this I developed a new understanding of my country. It is a poor country and in this context people develop a particular kind of poetry in their life, a way of living that is rich and full.” The title of the series “*Lost for Words*” echoes Fraser new found fascination and curiosity for his country. Taking photos across Welsh society, imbuing his work with narratives of class and labour, Fraser remarks: “I was particularly interested in beautiful wealthy country houses, I wanted to go into these houses and look at the owner’s life, their lifestyle is opulent yet it is supported by ordinary people. I wanted to take photos in both environments, beautiful rich houses and modest and ordinary homes.” Offering intuitive images of intimate spaces anchored in Welsh culture, zooming in on quotidian bric-a-brac, Fraser opens up a world within a world. Fraser finds the universal in the particular and the particular in the universal.

Talking about his interest in other artists, Fraser mentions Cy Twombly and Anselm Kiefer but otherwise seems focused on finding inspiration in unexpected places and everyday life. With a precise and intense gaze, Fraser invites us to a certain kind of meditation or reverie. He finds beauty in the ordinary, unveiling meaning and narrative for which he opens the door but leaves us the key.

Including works from across thirty years of Fraser’s career, the enigma, pull, and strange and delicate beauty of Fraser’s works were honoured in his recent retrospective at Tate St Ives. Fraser explains that the show was really a two year collaborative process with the director and curator Martin Clark.

Fraser comments: “The show and the book exceeded my expectations. It was wonderful to work with Martin, we worked extremely closely in choosing the works for the show. It was very hands on and this retrospective came from an extremely close involvement”. Fraser is currently working on a new project that he seems very excited about, and says will be an homage to the importance of mathematics. We surely look forward to discovering more of his ethereal, enigmatic and fascinating insights and views into our world.

Valerie Genty

*All images copyright Peter Fraser, courtesy of
Brancolini Grimald*

Saints Alive

at The National Gallery

In an attempt to validate the lasting importance of Old Master paintings on the ever-evolving contemporary art world, the National Gallery in London hosts an artist every two years to create a body of work inspired by its permanent collection of pre-1900 paintings. For the latest exhibition installment of this program, an eight-foot sculpture of Saint Apollonia has moved beyond her 16th century Cranach canvas to welcome audiences to Michael Landy's show *Saints Alive*. Apollonia and her fellow saints and martyrs appear time and again in the canvases that line the walls of the gallery, but her life and story, once common knowledge and a significant example of religious deference, have laid dormant in history books and wall panels for some time now.

For this show, Landy has resuscitated her into an interactive sculpture, inviting audiences to press a button that allows her to carry out her signature task of torture by pulling out her teeth with a pair of pliers. Working between horror and humor, the sculptures are importantly intended to revitalize both the artworks and audiences that grace the halls of the gallery.

The National Gallery is characterized by its quiet, serene atmosphere – a mausoleum built to memorialize and pay respect to the

masters and works of an often forgotten past. As a Rootstein Hopkins Associate Artist, Landy has joined the ranks of many contemporary artists invited to the gallery for a two-year residency to revitalize the stagnant collection of pre-1900 painting. Like Ron Mueck, Peter Blake, Paula Rego, and others invited for the residency designed to blend contemporary and pre-modern art, Landy observed paintings from the gallery to inspire his project.

Never trained as a painter himself, he began by making drawings and collages of figures in Medieval and Renaissance works. He later took fragments of the figures that he used in his collages to create Frankenstein-like amalgamations of plaster body sculptures and mechanical material – discarded machines parts that he converted into working instruments. Documentation of his experience and process can be viewed in a video at the side of the exhibition, but the viewers themselves can witness the machines in action as they sputter and clang in sporadic movement.

On the surface, this project may seem atypical for Landy's practice. Associated with the Young British Artists and a graduate from Goldsmith's College, he is publically known best for his 2001 performance *Break Down*, in which he methodically recorded and subsequently destroyed everything he owned. His work often comments on the commodification of art and consumerist society, but it is also rooted in the notion of destruction, the questioning of values, and the power of recontextualization, each of which play a vital role in the *Saints Alive* project.

Landy highlights the self-destructive quality of saints and martyrs. Apart from Apollonia, Francis hits himself in the face with a crucifix when a viewer slips money into the collection box attached to his bust while Jerome strikes his chest with a rock, which was historically supposed to suppress his thinking about sexual desires. Likewise Thomas is poked continuously in the side by an unattached hand

in the spot where Christ was struck while on the cross, and a sculpture of combined saints is overshadowed by an axe, a sort of Sword of Damocles, that may or may not crack into the figure's head when switched on.

Though inherently serious, the sculptures have a purposely humorous and carnivalesque quality. With titles such as *Spin the Saint Catherine Wheel and Win the Crown of Martyrdom* and *Saint Francis Lucky Dip*, Landy blends the fine art exhibition with a carnival fun house, where the viewer has to participate to gain something from the experience. Each sculpture has a large red button for the viewer to push when he or she wants to bring it to life.

With the *Saint Francis Lucky Dip*, a crane reminiscent of a childhood candy crane machine reaches through the headless hole between Saint Francis' shoulders to retrieve a t-shirt from inside his body; though, more often than not, the machine emerges empty handed. The prospect of winning a prize at the push of a button in conjunction with Francis' renunciation of all of his "worldly goods" brings in layered elements of social and cultural criticism in a fun and airy tone.

Despite their monumental size and the apparent mechanics of the figures, the saints possess an undeniable spark of life that rests deeper than the disjointed movements of the arms and cogs when they are switched on by the audience. Though slightly humorous to watch, the sound of the machines whirring and repetitive strikes of Jerome's rock resonate throughout the rooms, keeping the audience's senses immediately and consistently tuned in. Upon entering the first room of collages and hearing the sounds uncharacteristic for the traditional gallery space, the liveliness of the sculptures has a greater impact.

Although the experience for visitors today was hindered slightly by a technical malfunction with the Saint Apollonia work, the show as a whole is successful in making

its audiences into active participants rather than passive observers, a direct link to the kinetic art of the 1960s and 1970s that Landy drew reference from. The animation and noise erupting from the sculptures contrasts with the silence and stillness that typifies the rest of the National Gallery. After playing a role in the reawakening of the figures in the sculptures, audiences are invited on a journey to find the source paintings for the saints. It's the viewer's turn to step right up to participate in the art and win the chance to bring the individual saints, the audience, and the gallery itself back to life.

Amy Bower



Adam, Eve, Others and a UFO (installation view), 2013

Haroon Mirza at Lisson Gallery

Since the late 1960s, London's Lisson Gallery has had a history of representing and showing artists whose work creates and fits a wider social and intellectual context. In keeping with this tradition, Lisson Gallery is displaying British artist (and DJ) Haroon Mirza's second solo exhibition at its Bell Street gallery. Mirza's body of work aims at questioning what defines music as an art form. He does so by integrating sound equipment with found objects in an attempt to blur the lines between music and noise.

Mirza's current exhibition at Lisson Gallery, entitled */o/o/o/o/*, is a series of four different installations. Each of these works occupies its own space within the gallery. Sound is the major focus of this show, and he deploys various clicks, lights and technical glitches in order to create a surprising and captivating experience for viewers.

The first interesting fact to note about the exhibition is that the viewer is led in through the side entrance rather than the main Bell Street one. The first large space is dedicated to the only soundless work of the exhibition, called *Untitled* (2013). This work consists of a very minimal light sculpture made up of green and blue LEDs aesthetically rooted in Minimalism, echoing the work of Dan Flavin. The sound emanating from the adjoining room immedi-

ately draws the viewer into the main space of the gallery. In *Sitting in a Room* (2013), Mirza combines elements of sound, video, and found objects. Five turntables are set up with amplifiers connected to them. One of these turntables spins a triangular shard of wood with an LED light bulb, while the others spin records with various pieces of tape or coins attached to them. The self-propelling needle mechanisms create lo-fi syncopated beats and rhythms. Set across from the quintet of turntables (but still part of the same work) is a video piece displayed on a flat screen monitor, showing a laptop running music editing software repeating the phrases "Rhythm articulated by speech" and "Speech is destroyed". These phrases are then edited and 'remixed'. As a whole, *Sitting in a Room* creates the underlying theme that will carry on throughout the show, which involves the use of the digital and the analogue to create sounds that feel very contemporary and perhaps futuristic.

Echoing throughout the entire downstairs space is *Pavilion for Optimisation* (2013). This installation, built with the help of Haroon's architect brother, Omar Mirza, is presented in a closed off room in which only one visitor may enter at a time. Inside this room is a long diagonal LED strip attached to the wall. This emits a burst of light accompanying a loud sound of flowing water. As the light slowly fades, leaving the room dark, a sense of disorientation kicks in. The most cunning of visitors will find that the noise is coming from a microphone hooked up to a shower-head at the far end of the gallery. With this piece, Mirza aimed to create the antithesis of

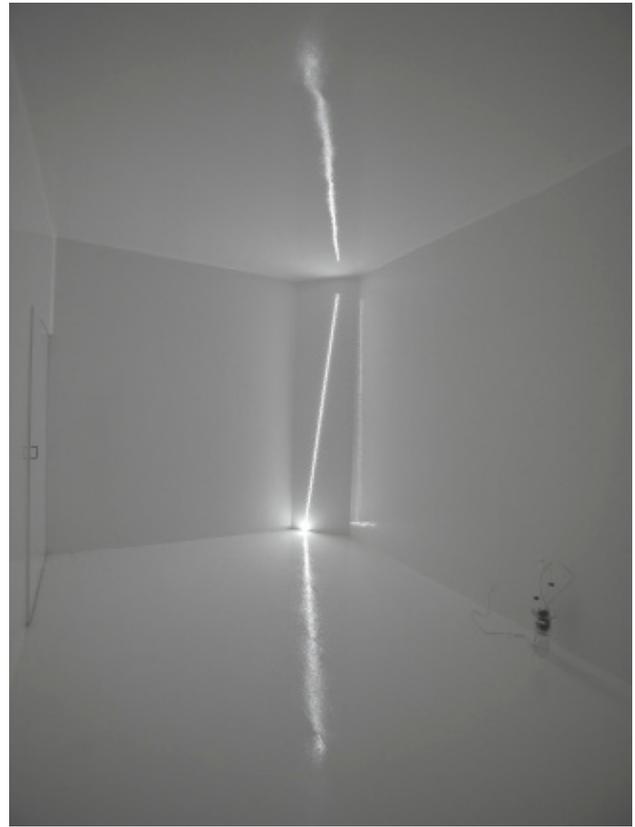
his echo-less chamber, *The National Pavilion of Then and Now*, his work from the 54th Venice Biennale, which earned him the Silver Lion award.

Perhaps the most exciting and engaging work of the exhibition is presented in the upstairs portion of the Lisson. *Adam, Eve, others and a UFO* (2013) is a separate room consisting of eight speakers arranged in a circle and anechoic foam covering the walls. The carpeted room is reminiscent of the images of a sound booth at a recording studio. The wires running from the speakers lead to a peculiar setup in the center of the circuit (apparently called a UFO circuit) with tiny LEDs. These speakers begin to play snaps and clicks, which sound like speaker malfunctions or circuit shortages, in a very surround sound-like manner. Upon further inspection the small LEDs light up with their corresponding speakers. Slowly, these noises begin to form a rhythm until a clearly defined beat is achieved. This piece explores the common theme of this exhibition and Mirza's body of work as a whole, which deals with the question of when noise becomes music. This piece in particular is, in a way, much more accessible than the other works in the show, as it invites the viewer to watch and listen to the progression, creating a sense of surprise at what noise or beat might come next.

Another aspect of this exhibition comes from outside the gallery walls. Mirza has created an online remix project at **o-o-o-o.co.uk**. Official collaborations come from Dave (aka Jellyman) from British art rock/neo-psychedelia band Django Django and British post-industrial band Factory Floor. Mirza provides various samples, and users have the option of uploading their own remixes of these samples via the music uploading site, SoundCloud.

On a visual level, Mirza's work embraces the minimal, vintage and analogue, while the sounds that emitted by the physical objects emphasize that he works in a digital world. In a culture dominated by over-produced and over-familiar music, it is refreshing to see an artist step back to reexamine and reinterpret noise-as-music and music-as-art. Through his immersive and exciting environments inside the gallery space and his collaborative project online, Haroon Mirza has created an accessible body of work in the realm of music and installation art.

Jeffrey Hurwitz



Pavilion for Optimisation (installation view), 2013

All images courtesy of Lisson Gallery, London

Cornelia Parker at Frith Street Gallery

It has been said that Cornelia Parker no longer creates but collects, co-ordinates and configures. On viewing her new exhibition at the Frith Gallery, however, it is clear this view is somewhat dated. In stark contrast to this argument, this show irrefutably showcases Parker's ability to create and re-create.

This small monographic exhibition showcases not only installations, for which Parker is most famed, but also displays sculptural and photographic works, which demonstrates her diversity and interest in the continuous exploration of artistic mediums.

Upon entering the space, it is immediately clear that the energy, tone and aesthetic of this show is dramatically different from the artist's other major works. For example, take *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View*, 1991, a meticulous and colossal exposé of energy and motion, all suspended as if time has frozen this moment – and everything within it – rather perfectly. Whereas, when entering Frith Street, you are not confronted by but introduced to *Unsettled*, 2012, an understated collection of wooden planks, unassumingly leaning against the wall. It is only on closer inspection that it becomes apparent that these pieces of wood are not simply leaning on floor or wall, but rather suspended. And it is here that the artist takes the opportunity to remind us of where we are, with a simple nod to this classic motif of hers, whilst confirming that this is something entirely new.

This prominent first piece is representative of the rest of the show, not however due to the familiar hanging of the work, but in an unlikely twist, through the theme of the street, the urban environment. Having grown-up in rural habitats, it is Parker's late exposure to the urban environment that enables both her fascination with it, and the show's underpinning current; Parker's vantage point as an 'outsider' is what presents her with the ability to see the unfamiliar in what we take to be quite so familiar, and put-forward a counter-intuitive perspective.

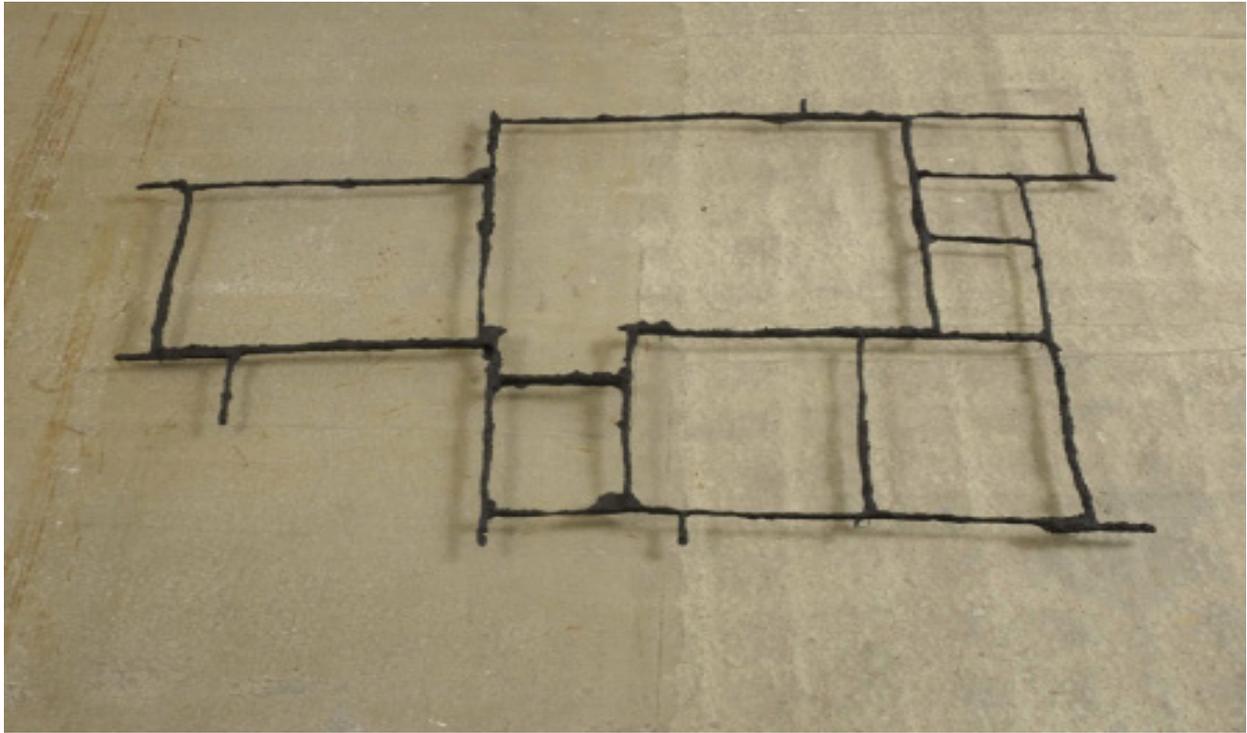


Cornelia Parker, Unsettled, 2012-2013, wood found on the streets of Jerusalem, wire, dimensions variable

Across the floor from the entrance lays *Pavement Cracks (City of London)*, 2012, mirroring *Unsettled's* illusion of floating. When approaching this second piece, it is unclear what pattern Parker has welded together, and only when standing over it does the piece reveal itself to be one of the most commonly encountered formations – pavement blocks.

Again, in *Pavement Cracks (City of London)*, Parker has intentionally used the unfamiliar to represent the incredibly familiar; by recreating the formation of pavement stones through outlines and cracks, Parker is cleverly drawing attention to the viewer's ability to see and not see, in the very same glance. In other words, by subverting the traditional method of deconstructing meaning, Cornelia Parker is able to make the viewer see what isn't there (pavement stones) and disregard what is (pavement cracks), which returns us to the contrast of familiar and unfamiliar, as the pavement stones prey on our sense of the familiar and memory, whereas, the cracks represent something unnoticed and unknown.

By her own admission, Parker notes that *Pavement Cracks (City of London)*, is inspired from her memories of growing up. The artist remembers a time when the pavement cracks were the key focus, and the blocks themselves were irrelevant, and it is this counter-intuitive manner of thinking and expression that she is choosing to replicate, in order to generate the same sentiment in adults. Parker notes that 'cracks in the pavement are kind of worrying...there is a lot of anxiety that gets welded into your psyche early on and pavement cracks are one of those'.



Cornelia Parker, Pavement Cracks (City of London), 2012, Black painted bronze, 206x 152x 9 cm, Edition of 3

Her personification of these inanimate lines as something confrontational is not only solidified in her own written experience, but is similarly suggested by the way in which the work has been displayed, as an obstacle the viewer is forced to negotiate around. Her rendering of the cracks appear as a grid like form, seemingly minimalist in nature and this style is echoed too in her Bullet Drawings series, which hang formally along the gallery wall.

In contrast a series of twelve black and white photographic works confront the viewer performing as small abstract paintings. Her *Prison Wall Abstracts: A Man Escaped*, 2012-2013 depicts the perimeter wall of Pentonville Prison in London. The broken surface of the wall had been repaired with white filler creating gestural patterns to cover the gaps, in opposition to the rigid grid like bronze forms cast in her sculptural works. Parker here brings to light an element of chance, what the city produces by accident. At the same time she plays with the notion of something ordinary becoming extraordinary, and in contrast to *Pavement Cracks (City of London)*, something familiar becoming unfamiliar. The wall is not immediately apparent as the subject of her work, it is only once we have read the title that we are able to gauge and interpret the wall. This principle of duality in her work thus becomes an important theme that runs through the exhibition.

Thinking about the space of the show there appears an interesting contrast between the traditional Victorian exterior of Frith Street and the interior, with its hollowed out infrastructure. In a sense the playful duality between the expected and unexpected in Parker's works comes into play within the gallery space itself. The exposed walls and concrete floors almost mirror and adhere to the works; the façade and interior of the gallery continues Parker's little joke with our expectations, using it as vehicle to champion the work and its ambitions.

This show focuses on Parker's ability to re-interpret both the familiar and unfamiliar under the guise of the city street. Unlike critics who present Parker as simply co-ordinating and configuring, this exhibition clearly demonstrates her creativity with new themes, and her astute exploration of a multifaceted sense of simultaneous duality.

Chloe Ballin

Images courtesy of the artist and Firth Street Gallery, London

Anne Hardy at Maureen Paley

In Maureen Paley's downstairs gallery, one familiar with Anne Hardy's practice would be forgiven for being taken aback by the very real presence of a large wooden structure. Two of Hardy's characteristically large photographic works (and one smaller work), in which one looks into a space of presumed chaotic human activity, occupy a wall each. These spaces, within the photographic frame, appear to be in-between purely fictional otherworldly constructions and something that might be happened upon. In *Script*, a wall made up of assembled off-cut boards displays scribbled words in chalk and charcoal, with unravelled magnetic videotape hanging from above. In *Notations*, balloons and plastic objects are hung from the wall, a tree branch, and shelf by a contrastingly hectic yet strangely composed array of tape, string, and paper.

Hardy makes these photographs in her studio, painstakingly constructing spaces within the arena created by the ever-present camera, and destroying the space once the image has been taken. The introduction therefore, of the actual space *Fieldwork (materials)* sharing the downstairs gallery, and the even larger *Two Joined Fields--Field (/ \)* and *Field (decagon)* in the upstairs gallery, marks a major turning point in the artist's practice. Hardy reveals that the agency of this solo-show is to open out the single perspective captured in the photograph, instead providing the parameters to explore the multiple relationships and perspectives between still images and experienced environments.

It is only by crouching through a single raised piece of hardboard that one can enter *Fieldwork (materials)*, a circular space adorned with wonky shelves, accumulated off-cuts of carpet on wall-hooks, piles of wood with expanded foam, sawdust, plastic bags and so forth, on a red carpet floor. Awkwardly crawling out of the limitedly available breathing space, one re-confronts the photographic works with an altered perception. There are noticeable material and aesthetic parallels from *Fieldwork (materials)* to *Notations*, but more than this; the photograph's flatness (and simultaneously the sculptural work's three-dimensionality) be-

comes strikingly clear. This component is highly successful given Hardy's choice of photographs for this show; many of her earlier works explore three-dimensional spaces, but these flatter works open a dialogue with the physicality of the present sculptural object, recalling a kind of perverse Greenbergian "medium-specificity". In seeing the backs of the constructed spaces, one can begin to imagine the reverse of the constructions in the photographs, exposing their fictionality - a particularly potent consequence given Hardy's interest in the literary space, particularly in the enduring relevance of J.G. Ballard's 'Concrete Island'. This in turn contributes to the flat images becoming more about making and their physical properties, and trying to imagine and unravel the idea of that space. How might one inhabit that space? How does this material feel? What function do these materials have in this space?

The employment of leftover and re-used materials envelops Hardy's work in presence through their accumulated histories: the boards, videotapes and text (leftover words from the titling process) in *Script*, the plastic and wood in *Notations*, the sawdust and carpet in *Fieldwork (materials)*. Contrary to the initial feeling of degradation and chaos, each object feels as though it has been individually identified, removed from its original context, and carefully placed into a different arena. As such, each object has its primary functionality removed, and exists as an uncertain, in-between entity. Subsequently, Hardy's spaces hover between the real and imagined, and feeling uneasy, we are unsure of their purpose.

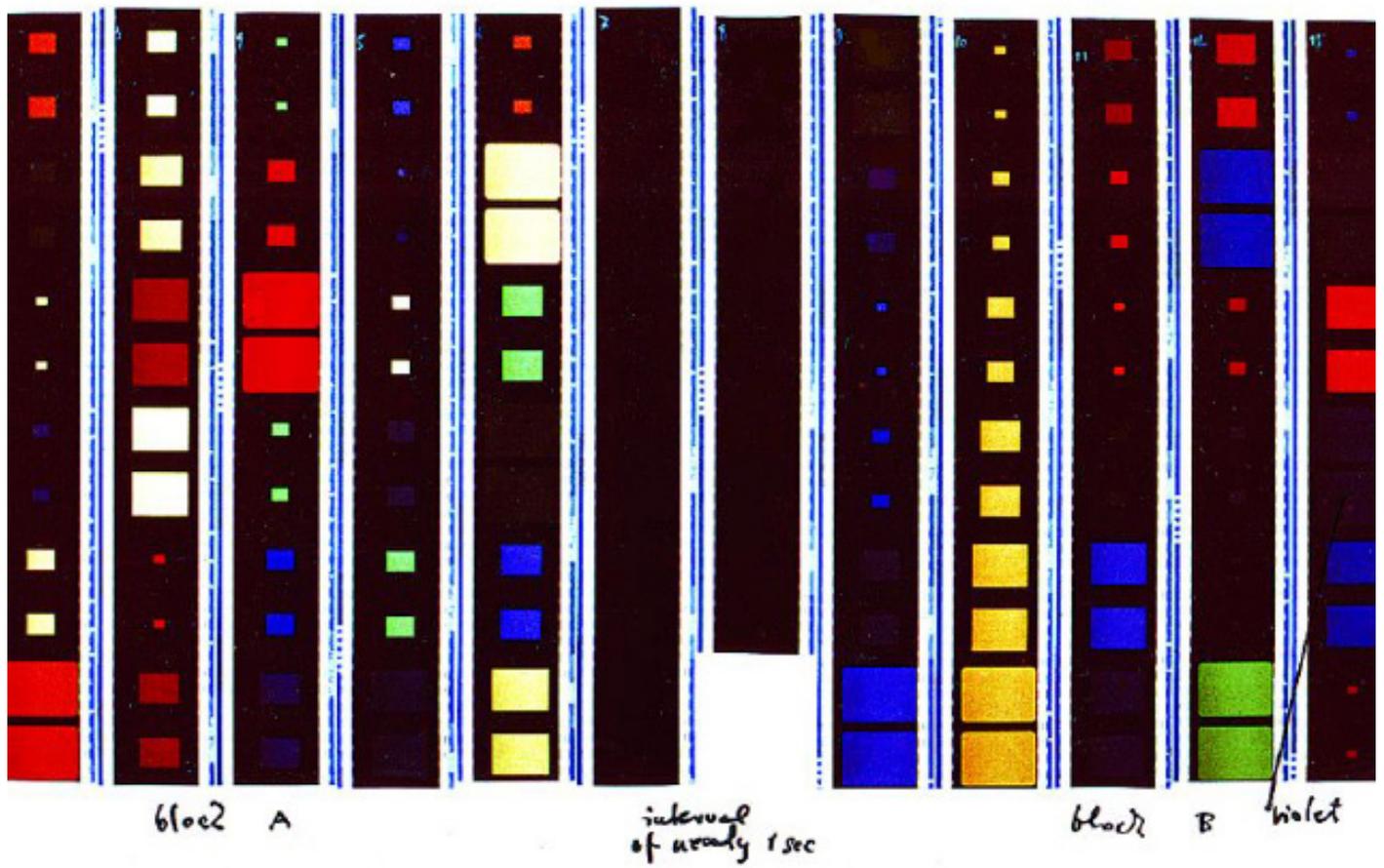
Moving upstairs, viewers are confronted by the exterior of a large plasterboard, MDF and wood construction, with building measurement notes and areas of pre-pasted wallpaper in evidence. This is a space within a space, the construction neatly fitting the upper-gallery's walls and distinctive low lighting-tracks. In exploring the exterior one discovers an entrance in the form of tightly hinged push-doors which creak awkwardly as you enter. Strongly contrasting the brightly lit white-cube exterior, one encounters dark blue walls scored with traces

of past use, expanded foam filling crevices, and geometric drawings in chalk mapping out some unknown formulas or plans. Sections of stitched together blue carpets - some more heavily worn than others - are adorned with concrete casts of shapes or 'tools', lined up and interlocking in formations one imagines must relate to the wall drawings. These materials are also *in-between* states. These seemingly functional objects (two with blue rope attached as if they can be lifted and used) are bereft of functionality in their medium and context.

A modest Polaroid, *Configuration*, occupies a wall facing the large construction, capturing a detail of an object in the decagonal space that you just explored. Uncertainty grips again. Despite its subtlety, this is not the same configuration of the interior you just witnessed. Which is true? Or better still, are *either* of these spaces factual? Or in a wider sense, how do we define *anything* in the world? Again, one might imagine Hardy's spaces in constant flux; these materials are organised and re-organised, used and re-used, as tools for an unknown and mysterious purpose. The uniqueness and immediacy of the Polaroid reflects these elements beautifully, exposing its own (and the structure's) fluctuation and dynamism, in juxtaposition with the labour-intensive process and finality of the large photographs downstairs.

During the making of Hardy's larger photographs the Polaroid plays an important, yet unseen role in experimental framing and recording. Its presence here as an exhibited work contributes to the gradual public revealing of her studio practice. Furthermore, the whole exhibition has become Hardy's temporary studio, in building and using the space prior and during the exhibition, as a tool for continual art making. Contrasting the comparatively static photographic works, Hardy's sculptural environments are modified and utilised in a continual making process, resisting finality and remaining in an on-going state of uncertainty.

Chris Sullivan



strips from KALATH colour/sound film 1980 35mm 12' (detail from the end)

Experiments with Art & Music

Calvert 22, an East-London gallery specializing in the art of Russia and Eastern Europe, opened a new exhibition on the 26th of June titled *Sounding The Body Electric: Experiments In Art And Music In Eastern Europe 1957–1984*. This ambitious and complex show will occupy the gallery space for almost the whole summer, until the 25th of August. Curated by David Crowley, an art-historian from the RCA, and Daniel Muzyczuk, the curator of the Polish pavilion at Venice Biennale 2013 and Museum Sztuki (Lodz, Poland), where this exhibition was first shown in 2012.

The title underlines the subject matter, time and geographical frame - though even an experienced viewer might be confused by the kind of works that are on display. Major experiments with music and sound made in Eastern Europe between the 1960s and 1980s are relatively unknown in the UK. This created a certain challenge for the curators in terms of transferring the show from its original Polish venue, but may generate a healthy curiosity from the British audience. The rigid censorship that existed in Soviet Union territories before the collapse of the communist regime caused these experimental pieces to be forgotten for several decades.

The aim of this exhibition is not only to show the link between visual art and experimental music, but also to raise questions as to why, particularly at this time, such experiments became possible and urgent. Was it because of technological progress? Or was it due to a temporary indulgence of the Soviet system from the mid-1950s to the late 1960s, which gave a hope for, if not truly free speech, at least free sound? Though the chosen artworks do not explicitly express political and social concerns, the historical context of that moment is so powerful that its influence can be heard and read even in the sequence of 'random' tones and words.

There are more than 30 works on display from Poland, Hungary, the former Czechoslovakia, and the USSR, including pieces by well-established artists like Krzysztof Wodiczko, Komar & Melamid, and Fluxus member Milan Knizak. The gallery space was specially redesigned for this show (Calvert22 transforms itself for each new exhibition), and the traditional 'white cube' has been turned into a 1960s-style space with walls painted in pure red, yellow, blue and purple. The lower ground floor has been altered to create a separate 'dark room' for a video work by Dora Maurer, Andras Klausz and Zoltan Jeney (1980).



5x, an 'audio-visual performance' created by composer Zygmunt Krauze and artists Henryk Morel, Cezary Szubartowski and Grzegorz Kowalski at the Foksal Gallery, Warsaw, 1966.

In terms of the media, the exhibition is unexpectedly diverse: apart from the actual musical compositions there are vinyl records, photographs, collages, drawings, videos, objects and an installation. Such an approach suggests that artists' practices went beyond just sound experiments, and also gives the exhibition a strong archival tone. There are documentations of all kinds: photos and films of artists making performances, printed music, original vinyl records, booklets, and even a map which is both an object, and a part of a performance.

At the same time the show is both playful and scientific. Some pieces are humorous and sarcastic such as the videos of performances *Living Drawing* (1973/1983) and *Tactile Drawing* (1969/1983) by Milan Grygar, while others are serious and academic like an archival video of a news report (1963) about the early activities of *Experimental Studio for Polish Radio*, an ambitious project made to explore new technologies in sound recording.

Interestingly, there are works that have a sentimental feeling, like the collages made by Katalin Ladik. Visually and conceptually they correlate with the late collages made by German artist Kurt Schwitters, whose retrospective could be recently seen at Tate Britain. As a forced immigrant he was assembling bits and pieces of his everyday life to capture the moment and save the memories of his new environment. Similarly, in the early 1970s Ladik, an artist from the generation after Schwitters, used the same techniques to create musical collages and visual poems on paper. She glued them together with extracts from women's fashion magazines; they were the way of entertaining and distracting oneself from the reality of mandatory bureaucracy and dictated ideology. The idea of blurring the borders between the aural and the visual and representing sound through scores or drawings ('graphic music') was revolutionary not only for a culture dominated by the conservative Soviet approach as to what could be consider-

ed as music, but also for the international scene.

It reflected the general shift in analysing and understanding art; the interpretation of the piece was left to the perceivers and involved their direct participation. The exhibition shows how this began in Eastern Europe - with establishing Experimental Studio of Polish Radio in Warsaw in 1957. It corresponded in time with a new approach to music proposed by John Cage, and even predated the concept of the reader's dominance later explored by Roland Barthes in his famous essay *The Death of the Author* in 1968.

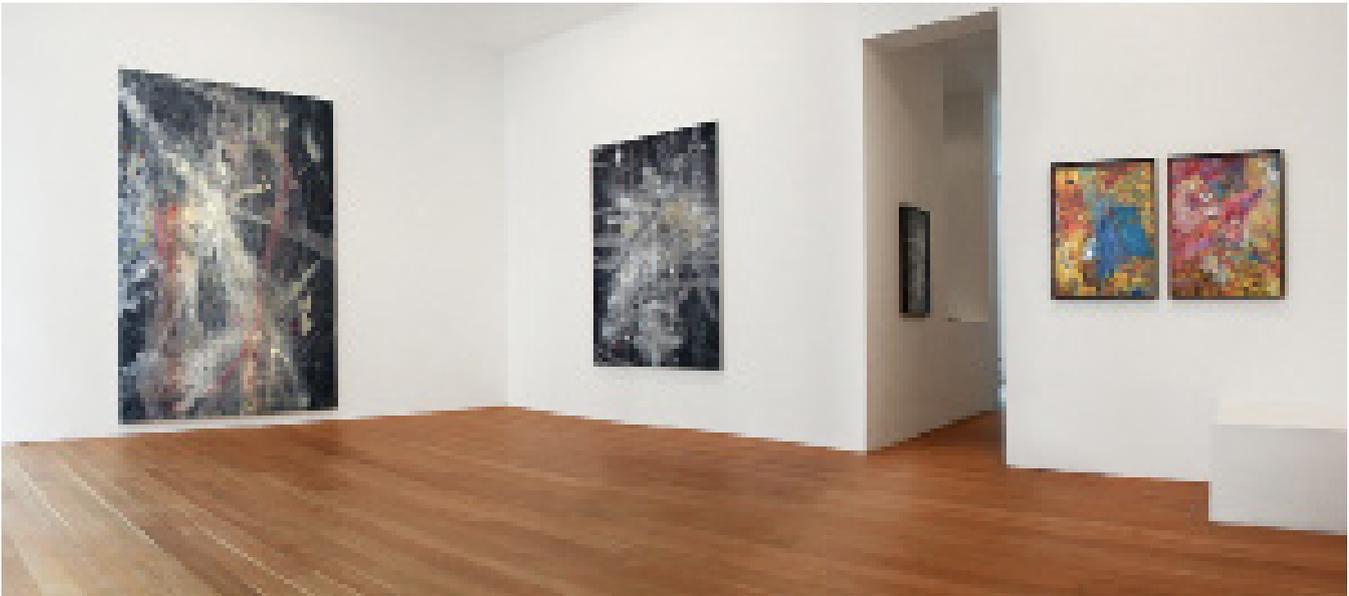


Vitaly Komar & Alexander Melamid, installation of Music Writing: Passport (from the Codes series), 1976, courtesy of Vitaly Komar

To sum up, the show attempts to reveal the most significant features of the musical experiments between the late 1950s and the mid 1980s. These first sound-based, though sometimes technically silent, works conceptually linked Eastern European artists with the Western cultural discourse, and demonstrated that progressive thought could develop even in oppressive environments.

Anastasia Aleeva

Image 1, Dora Mauer, Andras Klausz, Zoltan Jeney. Kalah, 1980. Video (digital Transfer), colour, sound, 10' courtesy of the artist
Image 2, courtesy of the Fokzal Gallery , Warsaw
Image 3, courtesy of Vitaly Komar



A Place That Exists (Installation view), 2013

Peter Lamb at Laurent Delaye Gallery

New works by Peter Lamb at Laurent Delaye Gallery evoke a sense of familiarity with a variety of techniques and styles arising from the work of the post-World War II Abstract Expressionists and Pop Art. They are not a mere re-examination of these movements, however. Lamb has recast and invigorated the established styles with photographs, debris, objects, and scrambled gestures of colour.

The exhibition features a neon light sculpture and seven works in his highly demanding technique involving numerous steps toward a final composition. Lamb's process begins with a representational photograph of his studio floor. The smooth and illusory photographic surface is reborn as Lamb attaches additional photographs and deletes or enlarges portions of the image. Additionally, akin to Abstract Expressionist's Jackson Pollock's footprints and cigarette butts, Lamb rubs the canvas on the floor to pick up debris and objects that create texture on the surface of the photograph. Impasto layers of paint and collaged materials are applied and imbue the new composition with a fervent intensity, remotely echoing the work of Pollock and Franz Kline along with a

nod to the Pop Art collages of Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg. Lamb borrows Pollock's gestural application of paint to an unbound canvas on the ground with the photographs of his own studio floor. Thick brushstrokes of paint are added, reminiscent of Kline's black and white abstractions of the 1950s and Willem de Kooning's work such as *Gotham News* of 1955.

The exhibitors have likened the compositions to the work of American artist Cy Twombly. According to the exhibition information sheet, unlike Lamb, Twombly was a reluctant fan of Pollock and believed that Pollock's gestures were too identifiable as a signature. Twombly incorporated graffiti-like drawings, words, phrases, quotes, and numbers in his paintings, but those gestures remained mysterious and inconclusive. The Twombly "anti-gesture" creates a barrier of anonymity that is lacking in Pollock but present in Lamb, because the compositions incorporate Lamb's hand as well as anonymity of the photographs.

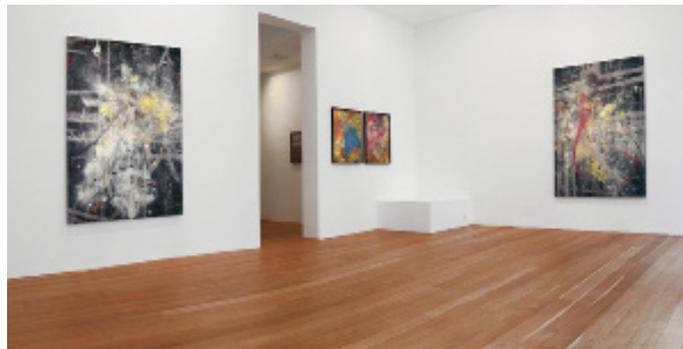
Spatial ambiguities permeate Lamb's seven compositions. The initial compositional image is the photograph of Lamb's studio floor. The photograph is a two-dimensional

representation of an existing three-dimensional space, and as a photograph it produces the illusion of an existing space. Additionally, as Lamb cuts, trims, and places his details of the photograph on the canvas, the original space becomes a mere memory. The viewer perceives the spatial ambiguity and moves in for a closer look.

Bloody Snakes Tongue Grey Mouth, 2012, stands out among the works in the Gallery. The painting appears to be thick layers of paint applied in the manner of the gestural abstractionists. Expressive splatters of yellow and red paint create a large focal point in the center of the darker composition. The expressiveness of the splatters is tempered by the grid-like scrambled gestures that run across the surface of the composition. Expressive and grid-like areas conceal the representational aspects of the underlying photographic image of Lamb's studio; hence, the spatial qualities are forced into an ambiguous state. Flatness, the very nature of the quality of a picture plane, is confronted by a complex structure of lines, shapes, and forms that decorate the surface.

Opposite *Bloody Snakes Tongue Grey Mouth* are two colourful paintings, *Ice Leaning Forward*, 2013, and *Falling Rock Purple Smoke*, 2013. The mere positioning of the more colourful works across from the darker image creates an intense dialogue among the works. The darker hues and lack of textural depth in *Bloody Snakes Tongue Grey Mouth* contrast with the various saturated colors and impasto texture of *Ice Leaning Forward* and *Falling Rock Purple Smoke*. In the preceding works of art, elements from the studio floor, such as duct tape and other debris, are combined and held captive with spray paint. Comparison has to be made between the quality of line in Lamb's work and that of the Abstract Surrealists. *Pink Light Showing*, 2013, reflects the dream-world landscapes of Yves Tanguy. Lamb manipulates the various gray values and the colourful splotches in *Pink Light Showing* in a manner that reminds the viewer of Tanguy's 1954 painting, *The Multiplication of the Arcs*.

The curatorial techniques demonstrated in this exhibition enhance the quality and nature of Lamb's works. The Gallery has large windows that provide natural light, illuminating and complementing the colours and texture observable within the works. Soft white walls and natural wood floors provide a soothing element that balances the chaotic nature of the compositions. Lamb's neon light sign, *Big Ben with Windows*, 2013, was arguably out of place. The sculpture is made of two rectan-



A Place That Exists (Installation view), 2013

gles and a diamond, a smaller yellow rectangle on the bottom right of the larger rectangle on top. The larger rectangle, consisting of two halves of colour, red and green, has a blue diamond placed in the center of it, and neither the fluorescent lines nor the primary and secondary colours complement or enhance the exhibit and are more of a distraction.

Peter Lamb lives and works in London and has had solo shows in London, Houston, and Los Angeles, in addition to many group exhibitions around the world. His work can be found in prominent collections such as Deutsche Bank, The John Jones Collection, The Roger Evans Collection, and the Schloss Leinzell Collection. His work can be seen in numerous upcoming exhibitions.

Carrie Engerrand

Per Kirkeby's Late Work at the Michael Werner Gallery

It has long been a myth that every artist is doomed to starve and live in poverty in the manner of Vincent van Gogh. Often artists acquire fame, success and celebrity status early in their life, only to live under the constant threat of falling out of favour from then on. Having been represented in the Cologne Documenta, the Venice Biennale, the Museum of Modern Art and many other institutions of distinction since 1972, Per Kirkeby is the best known contemporary Danish painter, as well as the counter example. He shows how a creative and intellectual mind can uphold the label of 'cultural legitimacy' (to say it in sociologist's Pierre Bourdieu's words) as well as a desirable status on the market over time. Following a 2009 retrospective at the Tate Modern, the Michael Werner Gallery is currently hosting a smaller exhibition of Kirkeby's late paintings. Michael Werner himself brought the artist to fame when they met in 1972 in Cologne, and after they met Werner became his most important critic.

The upper rooms of the gallery which can be found at Mayfair are hung with the artist's most recent works. Upon request one can then see the lower room which holds two monumental paintings from the 1980's, as well as a highly interesting sculpture of the same time. Kirkeby's practice is eclectic not only because it is equally occupied with culture, nature and history at the same time but also in regards to the medium, which reaches from painting, film and poetic text to architecture and more. In both his monumental and smaller two dimensional investigations of nature, it is hard and often impossible to make out organic shapes. Commonly referred to as his 'Landscapes', his paintings can hardly be called thus, because often the only remnant of nature is the colour scheme that the artist employs. The beholder's eye rushes over the abstracted picture surface restlessly, unsuccessfully trying to make sense of what is being perceived.

Untitled, 2012, which can be found in the last room of the exhibition, is an example of a common visual challenge posed in Kirkeby's late work, because there is no depth in the traditional sense. The eye does not recede into the distance to a central vanishing point. Instead, what compositionally appears distant is painted in bright reds, warm colours which visually push to the surface of the work, giving an alienating effect to the perceiver whose gaze then finds entrances into the distance scattered through the work in a rather surreal and untraditional manner.

Apart from his brushwork becoming more uninhibited and looser, the most significant change that Kirkeby's painting has undergone since the 1980s lies in a new colour intensity. Almost neon dense yellows stand out from deep blues and greens, unlike earlier works which are based on more natural earth colours; these occasionally snap through in recent paintings such as *Panikos II*, 2013, where the dry brown tones are silhouetted against intense new blues. Kirkeby himself claims that the inherent structures as well as the overall construct of the works have remained the same throughout the years. Yet, one should not make the mistake of associating this statement with his layering of colour, which has been so frequently associated with the artist's studies and work in geology that the idea has falsely become somewhat of a cliché. This is not to say that there is no reference in Kirkeby's work to the way the earth is built up, but it is held as a generally more important factor in his practice than it really is. Ultimately, Kirkeby himself holds that even the colouring of a wall is just layering of paint.

Kirkeby's true strength lies in his powerful lyricism. This attribute is both good and bad at the same time, because the idyllic appeal in combination with the landscape genre alone are enough to recall a nostalgia that is usually associated with a bygone northern romanticism.

This, to a certain extent, also explains Kirkeby's affinity with Kurt Schwitters whose landscapes have been rejected as old fashioned. It is therefore due to the conservatism that the tradition burdened "landscape" suggests that Schwitters's natural works have never been acknowledged by anyone but Per Kirkeby, and a recent exhibition at the Tate Gallery has tried to revive what Kirkeby calls Schwitters' 'forbidden works'.

Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that the romantic lyricism in Kirkeby's work is neither old fashioned nor conservative, because the artist combats the idea of being over romantic with the right amount of inherent culture, science and analytical criticism in his paintings.

The secret to Kirkeby's work is exactly the fact that the viewer gets lost in it. Due to their complex but unaggressive nature, the work asks the viewer to ponder it for a while. New forms and shapes are seen the longer the work is looked at – without trying too hard. His painting does the job for the viewer, who should step back and let the painting speak rather than try to make sense of something that probably does not want to be entirely understood. It can clearly be seen in the Michael Werner Gallery exhibition that Kirkeby's painting practice finds the right balance between remaining authentic and faithful to his original style while changing enough to remain interesting, continuously progressing in visual appeal.

Beatrice Loeffel

Pino Pascali and Jannis Kounellis at Luxembourg & Dylan

A black, outmoded, life-size cannon, the type used in World War II, aims at an unruffled pastel-coloured seascape hung in the first floor of a renovated Georgian townhouse.

War and Peace? The Beauty and the Beast? Apparently not.

The Gallery Luxembourg & Dayan, known for its ambitious museum-quality exhibitions of modern and contemporary art is taking the risk of juxtaposing Pino Pascali's 1965 *Cannone Bella Ciao* with Jannis Kounellis' *Untitled Piraeus* seascape, painted in 1963. Undoubtedly the display is a well-curated homage to two of the main figures of the Arte Povera movement, whilst simultaneously recreating the aura of *Arte Abitabile*, the iconic 1966 exhibition by Enzo Sperone held in his Turin Gallery. This seems attune within the tendency in today's curating connives, and one cannot help but to be reminded of another current exhibition: *Live in Your Head; When Attitudes Become Form*. Held at the Fondazione Prada for the 2013 Venice Biennale (Pino Pascali and Jannis Kounellis amongst many other Arte Povera artists who were represented), the restaging of Harold Szeemann's legendary 1969 exhibition is an attempt to recapture the historical spirit of one of the most groundbreaking shows of the past.

Deliberately or accidentally. In any case, the Gallery's courage to exhibit dialectically contrasting pieces not only should be acknowledged but seized as a successful undertaking that brings forth the profound dialogue between these two works.

Pino Pascali executed *Cannone Bella Ciao* in 1965 as the main piece for the exhibition *Arte Abitabile* at Sperone Gallery in Turin in 1966. The work was part of a series of sculptures based on the trope of weaponry, reminiscent of his childhood encounter with the Second World War. Born in 1935 in the waking of the

imminent conflict, Pascali himself expressed that the first games he played were based mostly on warfare. "My toys were piles of objects found in the house, which represented weapons. For example, a bean became a bullet, a broomstick and a box held together with a rubber band became a rifle, a rolled-up piece of paper tied to a stool was a cannon, a saucepan was a helmet, two pieces of wood nailed together were a sabre, three pieces of wood an airplane and so on. The way I played with other children was largely based on the war-heroism representation of the grown-ups (our fathers were at war)". These sculptures, made out of assembling-pipes, old carburetors, and pieces of scrap, seem anything but menacing. Given that the sculptures are clearly nonfunctional, *Cannone Bella Ciao* evokes not violence but playfulness while effacing the boundary between sculpture and installation. However, even when deliberately denying military precision and purpose, the work still reflects on its historical context, the Vietnam War and the student revolts of the 1960s. Its political significance is unmistakable and as Pascali has stated, "what fun it is to put a cannon in a place for sculptors, to be able to really put it there in that so sacred, false world." Inevitably the work has neither lost in tremor nor in actuality, no matter whether we are writing the year 1966 or 2013.

Born in Greece, Kounellis moved to Rome in 1956, where he studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti. By 1961 he began to paint on newspaper in order to reflect his critical views on the modern socio-political situation. Developing a distinctive plastic vocabulary that initially resembled a codified script in the form of letters and equations, he gained prominence as an acknowledged representative of the Arte Povera movement. In 1963 Kounellis expanded his practice, adopting a variety of non artistic ma-

terial into his work, including everyday objects which ranged from live animals, smoke or fire to earth, burlap and gold, in aims to incite new connections within the mythical, the cultural and the urban.

Given the previous context, the work exhibited can scarcely be recognizable as his signature practice: velvety pastel-like oil painting with almost meditative and washed out colours is certainly not what one would expect from Kounellis' work of the time. But whilst the schematic, quasi-minimal sea and the coyly hinted sun are stripped down from political comment, they still reflect on Kounellis' personal need to engage in an original visual language more suitable to the artist's inherent demands. As an antipode to Pascali's *Cannone*, it is almost irreplaceable and necessary.

Placing Pascali's cannon in juxtaposition with the seascape painting by Jannis Kounellis, Luxembourg and Dayan provokes the unexpected. Yielding to their own playfulness, both works share a kinship in spirit whilst at the same time encouraging the viewer to explore the delicate tension and the role of subjectivity, boundaries and experience. A dialogue sufficient of its own, manifesting the worn out but still true adage that less is sometimes more.

Rebecca Niehaus-Paas

Interview with Spartacus Chetwynd

Last year, British artist Spartacus Chetwynd was nominated for the Turner Prize for her exhibition *Odd Man Out* held at Sadie Coles HQ. Ranging from the quixotic to the anarchic, spontaneous and ritualistic, her carnivalesque performances raise socio-political debates with all the ingenuity of childhood fantasy. Currently preparing for her upcoming show in October 2013 at Monteverdi, Italy, her thoughtful replies here exhibit all the joy and gravity that ignites her work. I am grateful to her for this courtesy.

Yvonne Kook: I suppose this question comes up in every interview, but nevertheless, it is a good starting point for unravelling Spartacus Chetwynd. I cannot help but notice the suggestive oxymoron of your name that combines the name of a common slave with a Baronetcy. At the same time, your performances denounce materialist values such as social class, money and power. Given this context the name change adopts both political and personal registers. I am interested in knowing the reasons behind this shift, and its implications.

Spartacus Chetwynd: All the people I have come across as teachers, all the ones I have enjoyed and respected, have had a nervous breakdown. When they recovered from their attacks, in the process of coming back to life, they changed their names. One English teacher was very exciting: he walked into the classroom upside down, on his hands. I thought it would be interesting to change your name and see if you could pre-empt a nervous breakdown. I was interested in incantation, the power of knowing a name of something and singing it. I changed my name as an experiment and it is still interesting to me: it seems to work like a mirror. I think being an artist is like playing a card game. When my name is less annoying and has settled into being what it will be, then I'd like to change it again. Now I have a married name, Cichosz and so I'd like my next new name to be Marvin Gaye Cichosz. Both Spartacus and Marvin Gaye died in interesting ways. I am instinctive, it's later I notice there's a logical strategy...

YK: Does this political act correspond to a pivotal moment in your career as an artist?

SC: As it turns out, the name is perfect for representing the performance structure, as volunteers contribute to the projects but actually I am the boss! He-he-he, hilarious!

YK: As a performer, your practice inherently seeks to have an immediate relationship to the audience. In some instances, the public is even incited to actively collaborate. I believe Brecht's notion of *Verfremdungseffekt* is central to your practice as a way of destabilizing dominant cultural forms. However, it must then find its way to the hierarchical walls of galleries, museums and fairs. To what extent do you feel there is an irreparable loss in that transaction?

SC: Destabilizing dominant cultural forms... Sounds great. In the past fifteen years of making artwork I have not hired 'unprofessional' actors. I have been working for free with volunteers, mostly friends and family... And yes, I love Brecht! However, I am not trying to strain the narrative. I am encouraging the audience to feel that they could join in, as they can see clearly that it would only take 'putting on a costume' and standing up and doing the rudimentary mime that has been relayed only moments before. I make a mime/narrative that is planned to five-minute sections triggered by sound and with designated areas to move. The performers are free to improvise within this framework. You mention hierarchical walls. Often I like the oddness of a situation. The Frieze Art Fair was a great place to perform, it was like street theatre, as people were wandering through all the time, and they were pleased, rather than being annoyed by this freedom. The contrast to the fair worked in our favour. Other times have been more strenuous, but mostly I believe you should not limit yourself. Do anything; work in any venue irreverent of legacy and hierarchy. The most obvious difference I can see is that the audiences in more formal venues take more time to be put at ease and there are more layers to go through before a good atmosphere develops.

YK: How do you feel about galleries showing a work that by definition is defiant of institutions? Do you find it difficult to cope with the need to promote and sell your work through conventional resources while at the same time operating in a marginal space?

SC: I feel good about the art world. I love it. Often going to a show is like finding a ring of mushrooms in the forest. There are always new things springing up and surprising you. I want to be part of it, I believe in contributing. If you don't like the predominant flavour of art then put on an event or a show with the message and type of art you believe in. I find all the problem-solving and analysis of commoditizing performance art to be fascinating—how to preserve a product that is ephemeral and transient. Tino Sehgal is a king in this field. Many Latin American artists have clever ideas and solutions; it keeps art interesting. Manzoni's tinned poo? Why not? The need to promote and sell your work through conventional sources is sort of interesting.

YK: Being nominated for the Turner Prize is an honour for any artist as it invokes a lineage of the foremost names in the history of modern British Art. How did you feel about this nomination? Do you feel something has changed?

SC: I have not noticed any change in me so far; I have noticed that people who were not so sure about me have become surer about me. Somehow I taste sweeter now.

YK: Your mother, Luciana Arrighi, was a production designer and this upbringing clearly plays an influential role in your practice. In your DIY performances you are not only involved as an actress, but also as a costume designer, set designer, etc. Do you see your practice more as a production than a performance? Is that why you often sign your works “a production by Spartacus Chetwynd”?

SC: I love my Mum, I am very proud of her career. She is about to start a project with the director who made *DownFall...* cool! Yes I was brought up on set and working for my mum. My mum has never given us hand-outs; instead she has employed us. Your production question is funny and nice to be asked. I wrote ‘A Spartacus Chetwynd Production’ because I made everything myself, by hand, and this statement felt ‘big’. It is written in the photocopied booklets / programmes I make to accompany the performances, with credits and source references. I feel as if I have worked hard to preserve the quality that is unaccountable and fun, I have worked hard to stay standing still. So rather than grow as a company and become more professionalised I have worked hard to shield the usual path and to allow mayhem, spontaneity and innocence to continue.

YK: In your performances there is no distinction between high/low culture—Marx coexists with Star Wars and Ingmar Bergman. Your work is suffused with references to Dickens, Bakhtin, Jarry and Milton, The Simpsons, Incredible Hulk or Michael Jackson, to name a few. This indiscriminate approach to all products of culture as equally productive for an understanding human practice seems aligned with your background in anthropology. How does anthropology influence your work?

SC: This is great to read, it sounds great—perhaps I should just say yes! I like being indiscriminate and irreverent and random, it comes naturally to me. I am sure it was through the upbringing I had before I studied Anthropology. I am sure Anthropology helped by giving me access to texts that intellectually verify ideas that are wild and allow free-spirited behaviour.

YK: When I think about your work, two quotes seem handy. First, Bakhtin's concept of laughter, which I believe you are familiar with. By this I mean that in your performances all these sources appear distorted, dislocated and parodied, generating laughter, but at the same time some kind of self-consciousness. The second one is from Ricoeur and his idea that the understanding of oneself and of human nature is always a mediated experience. By re-appropriating the epic and the everyday, these spectacles seem to perform a meta-reading of those cultural artefacts while at the same time opening a new perspective with which to understand the agent of those products. Do you see this in your work? Is this a conscious intention? What draws you to do your work?

SC: What draws me to make my work? Serious chats-through conversations with people where I realise there is an idea to explore. I research and then I have sort of visionary flashes that make me grin, then I return to the people I had the conversation with and see if they'd like to perform the ideas with me. The concept of a meta-reading is interesting and yes, perhaps this is really apt. Perhaps this is a perfect analysis of an audience processing the mimes I do, but such a word is a little foreign to the way the live event or performative element works. It's more unconscious and vital. It is not stuffy at all. If it were a hairdo it would be blazing and bouffant! Bakhtin is amazing. He is the intellectual who lets hilarity into high culture. He opens the door.



Mandrake Man Performance, 5 May 2011

YK: You are an amazing painter as well. What does painting mean for you? In what ways is it different or similar to your practice as a performer?

SC: Painting is really different in terms of process, as you are in isolation and the relationship is only with the materials and not with other people. The intensity is different. With the performances there is a drive and an effort that continues over months, you have to stay close to the process, keeping your foot on the drive-peddle and steering past problems. Finally everything is ready and the end-result is enjoyable in some way, so it is exciting and funny. The paintings are stressful and quick, as I demand myself to work in a fresh way, to stay standing up, energetic. The process has to happen in a period of about three hours and then I stop. The result is often that I am pleased with the mark making and appearance of the effort I have put into the work. The prep/making of the performances is different; I can spend more calm methodical time, hours and hours, making a prop or costume, up to a week on one costume often. There is a slower sense of ease to the making. I can chat and listen to audio books, whereas with the paintings I need to be alone and in silence. Maybe the link is the live moment of the performances and the live moment of when I paint: both are energetic and unknown? I am grateful I have the two different ways of working, one sociable and the other private.

YK: Being a performer and having lived in a nudist colony implies a certain degree of exposure. Given that you are so conspicuously overt, is there a Spartacus Chetwynd closed to the public? What is the private Spartacus Chetwynd like?

SC: I am predominantly an observer. So yes, I am quiet and observant and I research both on foot and by reading and watching. I want to live experimentally and to test out ideas literally. I have a lack of confidence and doubt that enables me to be questioning. Once I have made a decision, I am able to act and become driven and have the conviction and joy at the result! I know there is the risk that I can be seen as a dangerous 'believer' like a 'cult leader' but as I have said many times now, I am not malicious. The cult that I have is only as long as the performance lasts and it is fun.

Yvonne Kook Weskott

All images courtesy of the artist and Sadie Coles HQ, London



EMERGING ARTISTS



View of the installation, thermochromic cards, 2011, silkscreen, 4 x 6 cm

Stéphanie Roland

Throughout the evolution of Stéphanie Roland's practice, since her first exhibited works in 2008 in Berlin, a degree of obsession and a personal quest towards materialising and interpreting the notion of time is apparent.

Roland experiments with a variety of media, often with the newest photographic technologies, to explore themes such as childhood, memory, and boundaries of fantasy and reality, which all link back to her study of time. The strange and obscure space of solitude that transpires from her series *enfants modèles* (2011) prompts viewers to question and interpret her work in relation to their own past and through their own subjectivity.

The 2011 series uses photography, film and silkscreen to create intriguing portraits of children that appear to come simultaneously from a distant past, present and somehow from fiction. The dark background of her portraits and meticulous focus on light emerging from the figure reminds us of Flemish and Academic paintings, but Roland's use of the medium makes her portraits or landscapes still vividly real and present. Her deserted scenes

of children's playgrounds instinctively make one wonder what happened to the children before the picture was taken, and the viewer is invited to deduce the story of the children and what they would have to say.

The small silkscreened portraits of children, which use a thermochromic printing process, resemble family pictures kept in wallets as souvenirs and incite the viewer to touch them. At first the small pictures appear as black monochrome cards, but a warm touch of the hand allows the portrait of the child to appear. The portrait's disappearing when a hand stops touching the photo illustrates the vanishing memory of a loved one, and with time as the thermochromic process weakens, the portraits are fading away like memory fades away with time.

Roland's work also suggests an obsession with the representation of our memories. Her films, photographs and silkscreens are all images taken from the same apparatus adding another layer to Roland's exploration of their boundaries. Superimposing these different techniques, she further prompts the viewer to question the relationship between the media and



Roland was born and raised in a very scholarly family; both her parents were lawyers. Her life was driven by discipline from her early days until her second year of studying law at university, at which point her passion for photography grew stronger and became her mode of expression for something beyond her conscious self and tidy roots.

Roland's work grew in popularity with exhibitions in Brussels and Los Angeles, and her widespread appreciation led to a residency at Residencia Corazon Argentina in Buenos Aires in 2011. More recently, she was commissioned to produce work for a solo show that will take place at The Private Space in Barcelona and the Fundacio Forvm in Tarragona opening in September this year.

Since her *enfants modèles* (2011) series, Roland has been exploring other innovative photographic processes such as interferometry, which is used by Chilean observatories to photograph the universe. She is now working on another project for September that uses this technology together with photomontage. This new project will present a kind of reversed utopic landscapes that will have an ambiguous but simultaneous appearance of reality and fiction.

This appearance of reality and fiction/abstraction is reminiscent of Andreas Gursky's work. When looking at his large photographs from a distance, his work appears very abstract, but when approaching more closely, details appear and the viewer starts to understand the subject of the image and the reality of the scene. Roland is interested in this type of play found in Gursky's images, and her new work focuses on these simultaneous representations.

Roland's inspirations come from her every day life and travels as well as from spontaneous opportunities and unexpected encounters. She also looks to cinema such as David Lynch's films and Michael Hanneke's film *The White Ribbon* (2009) featuring dark, surreal and intriguing atmospheres. Boltanski, Jaar, Sugimoto and Ruff are the artists that she admires and follows closely.

Roland's young age (28 years old) and personal determination, as well as the encouraging support for her work so far, has

led to the acceleration of her international recognition. Her work to be exhibited in Tarragona and Barcelona in September will no doubt attract further opportunities and promote the development of her fascinating practice.

Astrid Carbonez

*On opposite page: "Violette, _____ - _____",
2011, digital C-type print, 50 x 70 cm*

All images courtesy of the artist

Adeline de- Monseignat

The body, motherhood, and sexuality have influenced and inspired artists throughout history. In her sculptures and installations, the young Surrealist Adeline de Monseignat, who works and lives in London, explores these themes alongside the notion of the uncanny, which had a significant influence on the Surrealist movement in the 1920s.

Having started her artistic career as a painter, de Monseignat shifted to working with three-dimensional surfaces during her BA in Language and Culture at University College London (2005-2009), where she studied in a variety of subjects such as film studies, Italian language, and French literature. In 2011, she obtained her MA in Fine Art with distinction from City & Guilds of London Art School. Since then, she has had a few solo shows and has been featured in a number of group exhibitions in the United Kingdom and the United States.

She created her first sculpture series titled *The Beginning of Everything* while studying Advanced Visual Studies in New York in 2010. Interested in everyday objects, she created sculptures using eggshells and magnets, trying to give importance to objects that are discarded without thought on a daily basis.

In *L'origine des Sens* (2010), she further developed this idea along side the concept of the uncanny. By casting a cocoon, lining it with fur and placing a stone inside, she created an interactive work of art reminiscent of *Breakfast in Fur* (1936) by Meret Oppenheim. Audiences are invited to put their hands inside the furry cocoon and retrieve the stone. The entrance of the hole is not visible due to the density of the fur, therefore creating a strange and unpleasant feeling. This piece was also influenced by Gustave Courbet's *L'origine des Monde* (1866) with which the title has a play of words.

Having a strong interest in Surrealism and the uncanny, de Monseignat has continued to create more interactive sculptural series such as *Mother in Child* and *Touching with the Eyes*, using fur as a fundamental medium that suggests touch and tactility. The role of the spectator is crucial to de Monseignat, who believes that art would simply have no meaning without a receiver; therefore, she is interested in the audience's experience while interacting with her art. This interest in creating interactive works of art could be seen as influenced by the works of Brazilian artists Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica in the 1960s who invited the viewers to interact with their work.



Adeline de Monseignat, *L'Origine des sens*, 2010

In her piece *Hairy Eye Ball (HEB)*, an edition of 30 sculptures (each 10cm in diameter), she further emphasizes the tension created by the fur and the desire to touch it, by enclosing the fur in hand blown glass spheres. The compression of the fur against the surface of the glass creates a tension and plays on a sense of sensuality and the fear of the unknown. In this series touch is only suggested but not performed, and, therefore, the spectator is left with an unfulfilled desire to touch the fur.

In early 2012, de Monseignat was selected by Justin Hammond to feature in the renowned Catlin Guide and was later included in the exhibition coinciding with the Catlin Art Prize, where her piece *Mother HEB/ Loleta* was then awarded the Visitor Vote Prize. In *Mother HEB/ Loleta*, she places a motor inside the fur in the glass, creating a motion within the fur that appears as if it is breathing. The viewer's senses are teased as he/she is presented with an inanimate object that appears to be breathing slowly. With the illusion of breath, she manages to make the familiar strange by creating something inert coming to life.

Her latest series, titled *Creaptures* (creaptures being a hybrid between creature and sculpture), have their origins in *Mother in Child* (2012), which was based on de Monseignat's weight and size as a newborn. This series was created in collaboration with artists and philosophers, such as Jonny Briggs, Clarisse d'Arcimoles, Robert Rowland Smith, and the artist's mother Netty, each of whom influenced the artist and shared her similar themes of origins and motherhood.

Each 'creapture' is created according to the weight and height of these persons as newborns. Therefore when holding the sculptures the viewer feels a sense of presence. The oval shaped creaptures are made of hand blown glass, the process significantly requiring the pressure of air in order for the glass to come to life.

The glass is also internally mirrored by mixing various liquid chemicals such as silver nitrate.



Adeline de Monseignat, Mother HEB/ Loleta, 2012

Because of this, the mirrored ‘creapture’ allows for its namesake to contemplate their adult reflection in their child object. This relates to Lacan’s theory of the ‘mirror stage’ of human development and the significance of the Doppelgänger (“The Double”) in Freud’s analysis of the uncanny.

By combining familiar elements in unfamiliar and contradictory scenarios and environments, de Monseignat’s works are able to unlock our access to the weird and unnatural through the notion of The Uncanny- the familiar- yet- strange. Her work hovers on the border between conscious and unconscious minds, unsettling yet not directly threatening because they incorporate characteristics that can be found in the familiar and seemingly harmless.

Shahrzad Ghorban

Images courtesy of Ronchini Gallery



Global Art and Affairs

Anarchy's Living Room

Upon entering the Beirut Art Center, you are confronted with several retro “living rooms” complete with shag carpets, old tv monitors, potted plants and other such 60s and 70s domesticity. The archaic television monitors of yesteryear that pepper these living rooms glow with fantastic dynamism as they are brought to life with the luminous rapture of the moving image. With sirenic appeal, the screens and living rooms beckon you to come rest your weary bones and let the glow wash over you. This is “*Video Vintage 1963-1983*” on loan from the Centre Pompidou at the Beirut Art Center. A generous exhibition of 72 works by 50-odd international artists, the roster includes many key figures from the formative years of video art history – Marina Abramovic, Joseph Beuys, Valie Export, Toshio Matsumoto, Mona Hatoum, Bruce Naumann, Nam June Paik – and artists renowned for their work in other media who experimented with video – filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard, for instance, and playwright Samuel Beckett.

Conventional cinema is often characterized by its adherence and loyalty to plot, genre, and the visual allure and beauty of the moving image. With roots in seriality, reality, mass communication, and entertainment, television, then, has its own rabid allure. Video art is something else. The form, if a single “form” can be distilled, is the most vexing of those that deploy the moving image. A piece of video art can have the duration of a short film or television episode, but without the payoff of narrative resolution, or cliff-hanging irresolution. Suspended in the perpetual present that is contemporary audio-visual culture, video art is for many, perhaps most, an inconvenience.

Curator Christine van Assche has clustered “*Video Vintage*” into three sections – “Performance and Self-Filming,” “Television: Research, Experiments, Criticism,” “Attitudes, Forms, Concepts” – situated in the three rooms that comprise the ground-floor gallery.

Anyone obediently following the show’s numbering scheme will soon encounter Martha Rosler’s six-minute-long “*Semiotics of the Kitchen*” (1975), a spoof of a TV cooking show. The artist walks onto a kitchen set, dons an apron and, with a deadpan delivery, introduces the tools of her trade. Raising “fork,” “knife,” “rolling pin,” etc., she demonstrates how

each is “used” – as a weapon.

The short works of William Wegman, and his hound Man Ray, are joyously offbeat. One piece finds the artist spoofing a television deodorant ad – spraying an unhealthy amount of the stuff under his arms. Another, more subtle, sees Man Ray and a fellow hound intently following the movement of something off-frame which, after a few minutes, is revealed to be a tennis ball. In yet another work, Wegman sits with an attentive Man Ray to discuss the results of the dog’s spelling test. This television-spoofing sensibility continues later with a montage of madcap works by the collectives General Idea and Ant Farm, clustered alongside works by Dara Birnbaum and Bob Wilson.

Paul McCarthy’s “*Upside Down Spitting - Bat*” (1975), features a grainy black-and-white image of the inverted artist’s naked legs and torso writhing while he spits. His “*Spitting on the Camera Lens*” (1974) is equally self-explanatory.

Chris Burden’s two-minute “*Icarus*” (1973) sees the artist lay naked on the floor while two assistants place a plank on either of his shoulders. They pour gasoline on these “wings” and set them alight. Burden remains prone for a few seconds before sitting up to avoid being singed. In “*Shoot*” (1971), Burden stands before an assistant with a loaded handgun, who shoots him in the shoulder. The shooter uses a bullet with its lead slug removed, but Burden is still left clutching his shoulder afterward.

If an exploratory curiosity seems to drive Burden’s body-centered work, artists like Valie Export and Marina Abramovic were compelled to devise body art of a more political nature. “*Trademark*” (1975), by Brazil’s Leticia Parente, is an expression of artistic dissent to the military junta then ruling her country. The camera follows her bare feet as she walks into a room, then turns to her hands as she threads a needle and carefully stitches “Made in Brasil” onto the sole of her foot – “Made” on the ball; “in” on the instep; “Brasil” on her heel. It’s excruciating to watch, especially when, apparently unhappy with the look of her “s,” Parent returns to add an extra stitch or two.

With so many artists challenging the premises of passive, non-confrontational entertainment – TV’s bread and butter – not all these works will appeal to everyone.

For those familiar with video art, and new media, “*Video Vintage*” is like a dinner party peopled with old friends, distant acquaintances, and the odd unexpected encounter. The implied thesis of this exhibition – that video art is somehow like a dissenting bastard child of television– is a satisfying one. For newcomers, the exhibition takes steps to educate the unfamiliar with a comprehensive history of video art, introducing a plethora of seminal works and artists. Indeed, the exhibition’s success is very much linked to the audience’s familiarity and openness to the medium. But, certainly, even the unfamiliar can enjoy the campy humor or psychedelic manipulations of artists like Bob Wilson and Naim Jun Paik while reclining in the comfort of these anarchic living rooms.

Dominique Porter

Interview with Vito Acconci

American designer, performance and video artist Vito Acconci (b. 1940) started his career as a poet but by 1969 turned to visual work, incorporating subversive social comment. The works of 1969 were photographic records of actions such as *Toe-Touch*. From 1970 Acconci worked in performances such as *Tonight We Escape from New York* (1977) held at the Whitney Museum where he installed a rope ladder alongside four loudspeakers playing fragments of a racist dialogue sounding as if they rose and fell along the ladder. During the following decade Acconci turned his attention towards architectonic installations and in 1988 he opened Acconci Studio in Brooklyn, NY focusing on the relation between private and public space. Five years later, in collaboration with the architect Steven Holl, He designed Storefront for Art and Architecture, a gallery space in Manhattan. The project replaced the existing facade of the gallery with twelve panels that pivot vertically and horizontally to open the space directly into the street. The panels open in different configurations offering a changeable façade that connects the inside and the outside.

Bianca D'Ippolito: Acconci Studio opened in 1988, what was the main purpose at that time?

Vito Acconci: I wanted the work to be architecture and not art, because architecture means creating a space that people can be in the middle of, they don't have to be in front of it. I resented art because I hated, and still hate, the -do not touch-signs in the museums so I thought, the only way people can be part of something is creating a space. Maybe that's changed somehow, but still I think architecture is used, art is generally seen. Also, I didn't want we, Acconci Studio, to have total control on the project. Ideally we could start something but then maybe people can take the space into their own hands and have total control of it. Actually, I don't know if we have really reached that. (Laughing) But I'm not sure how we could have got to that point. We used to have four designers plus me, but at the moment we are having a hard time as we only have one designer working with me. That's not because we don't have commissions but because being a group was the most vital thing for me.

BD: In the late 60s artists, dancers, film-makers and musicians began to settle in the industrial zone of New York, turning factories and warehouses into spaces for living and working. It was also the time of the feminist and student movements and the development of performance art.

How do you look back at that scene now?

VA: In the late 60s to early 70s, the so called 'gallery neighborhood' that used to be uptown Madison Avenue, moved to Soho and probably the motive was that the galleries wanted to show where the art-doers lived. Castelli, Sonnabend, John Weber and André Emmerich all opened on 420 West Broadway. In the beginning, they weren't primarily trying to sell work but instead, they were trying to have spaces in which people can do things. I think gallery dealers at that time treated young art-doers almost like window-dressing: they would present and advertise the gallery and then, they could take people who came into the back room and sell them something. Now younger art-doers think primarily about selling work.

BD: In the early 70s you produced some of your most known pieces like 'Trademarks', 'Step Piece' and 'Seedbed'. Did you share ideas with other artists that were working at the same time?

VA: Sure. I knew Chris Burden's work although I didn't really know him until a few years later. Dennis Oppenheim and I knew each other really well. At that time, the performance world was much smaller so each of us knew what let's say Gina Pane in France, was doing. Also, a lot of us had been asked to go to Europe. However in retrospect, it seems that the real reason for galleries in Europe to bring people who were doing performances was that they didn't have to spend money to bring over work. They only had to pay for the art-doers' transportation and then the art-doers would do a piece and the piece would disappear.

BD: You started your career as a poet but then shifted towards performance, video and installation, can you talk about this transition?

VA: Initially, I wanted to move on a page from one margin to another and from one page to the next. I thought that this would be something for the reader to do.

But gradually I thought: why am I moving across the pages when there is a real world, a terrain out there? So I started to think of the street and the sidewalk. I felt that I had to start doing things that nobody would even notice, like following people for example.

BD: Finally, you are now doing architecture with a strong emphasis on the public sphere. Does this have a political and social significance for you?

VA: Yes, I think that the major reason for the doing of architecture should be to make people more influential than they couldn't be before. I always wanted architecture to lead to some kind of change but obviously, most of the architecture is there to keep a particular culture going and not so much to change it. If architecture could officially change a culture, then probably most of the buildings, especially in the United States, would be office buildings! It would make so much more sense if the space can be changed by users and respond to people's desires rather than people adapting themselves to the architecture. There have been some little steps, but it doesn't seem to happen as fast as I always thought. If people can do whatever they want with the cell phone, why can't people do whatever they want with a building? It might be a kind of interesting way to get at a different culture but I don't know if I can envision that culture as much as younger people could do. I'm curious to know how you see architecture.

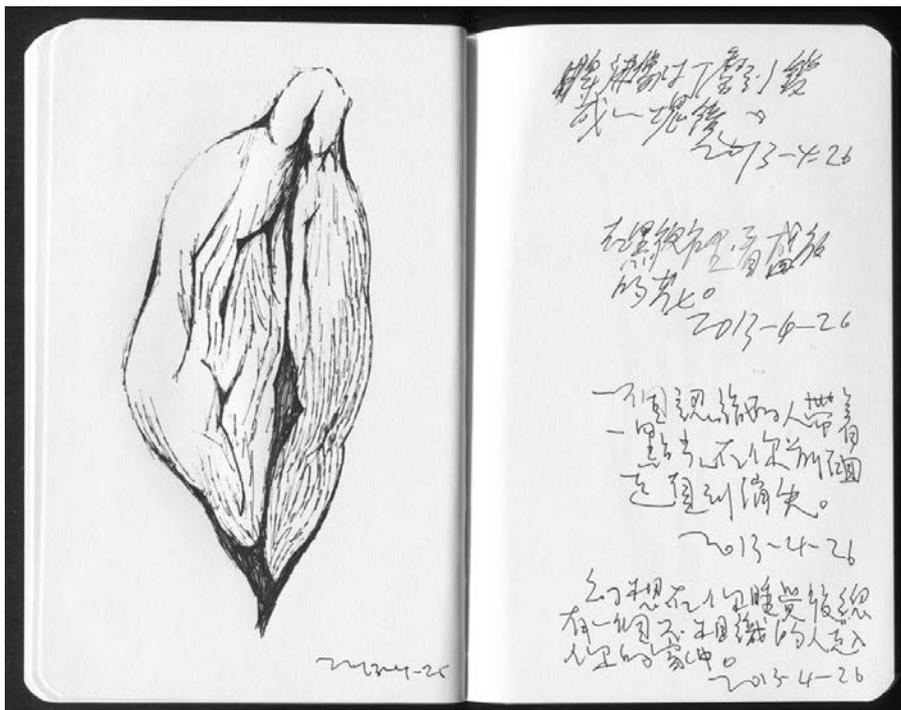
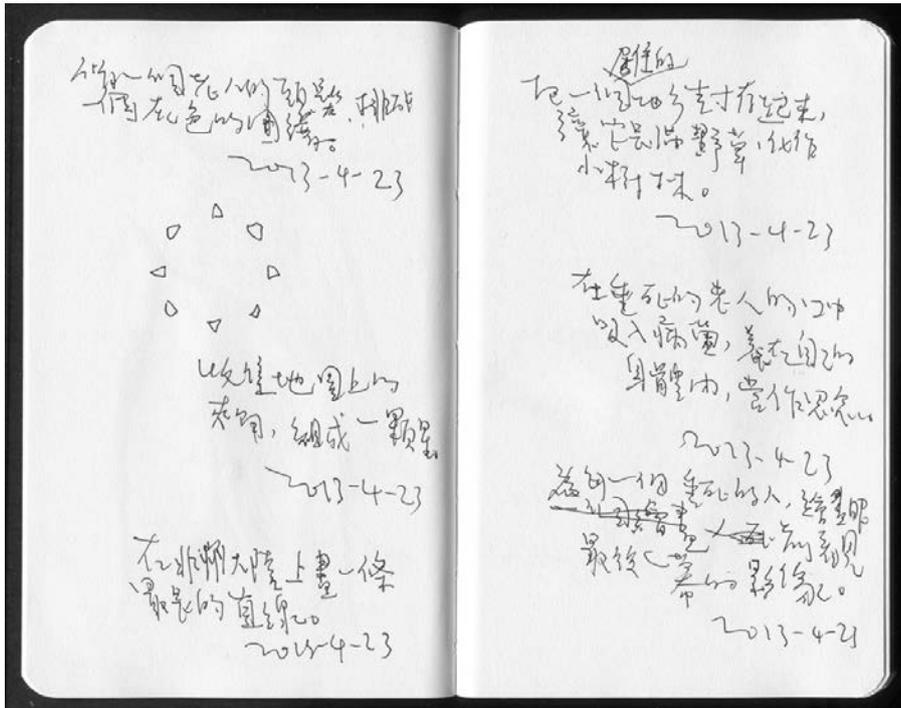
BD: Architecture is a funny practice. People think that architects are creative in terms of inventing something whether it's a building, a space or an object. Actually, architecture is subjected to so many laws, rules, styles and structures that it's difficult to keep your initial idea until the very end of the project. The creative process more often stays on a drawing or a model and it ends as soon as you start building which might be the *raison d'être* of architecture.

VA: Unfortunately that seems to be true. That is true. Sometime in the late '18s and '20s in the USSR, architecture seemed to be going to turn the world upside down and make a new world, but most of that was never built and the same Soviet Union that produced this architects also produced a totalitarian regime.

BD: If you had a wish for the future, what would it be?

VA: I know this is not going to happen in my lifetime, but I wonder if sometime soon all the architecture would move. I think we need a world to flux and maybe the future has no national boundaries. In almost every country now, people seem to be terrified of the idea of immigrants because immigrants are going to take over 'their' lands, 'their' spaces. But there might not be such a thing like immigrants and people should be able to go as they please, over borders. There might not even be borders. I think a new world can only come from an attempt to break up the known world. Now we think in terms of surfaces, planes and lines, but what if the world changes in a way that we start seeing as a baby first sees it, with dots, with pixels, with particles so that nothing is separated into times? Then the world can be part of a new. But I think, a person stops seeing that way when he is one or two years old so, he doesn't have too much time to think that way. (Laughing)

Bianca D'Ippolito



above and below sketches made by the artist during his meditation

Interview with Pak Sheung Chuen

We started the interview after Pak Sheung Chuen finished his frugal breakfast - currently staying in Texas for his Artist-in-Residency program at Artpace, Pak explains that he has made good use of his time, taking in long bus journeys, aimlessly exploring the cities as well as visiting the pagan and cult temples. He says: "Mostly I travel abroad on my own. Its the best time to deal with my inner-self."

Pak is a devoted Christian who practiced meditation on a regular basis for seven years. "This helps me keep traces of how my mind works, as you need to concentrate and clear the mind." Pak is not an optimist, this is his way to achieve inner-peace. He has now shifted from meditation to creation in order to equally draw from, and fill, his emptiness. "Sometime you may feel yourself dried out for no reason, a feeling of hollowness...when I create I sense there is an energy transformation process taking place. You need to face your fear, and when you have overcome your ups and downs there is a sense of fulfillment that grows in your heart."

Pak is not a painter, sometimes his work even has no medium. He says: "Mostly it's only an idea." If you could understand Chinese, you would find his work more astounding; he plays around with the meanings of words and phrases. Recently he made a work for Lehmann Maupin Gallery, which was a statement (or literal translation) about the fact that you can spot two full moons in the word 'moon', while the Cantonese pronunciation for moon means full. "The curator understands the meaning

literally, unfortunately due to the limitation of translation, the full concept of the work could never be delivered in the translated English version." Should the issue of cross cultural readings be considered as a fundamental issue when making an artwork? Pak laughs and replies that locality should be something an artist wants to preserve, as it is a part of his practice.

It is a fruitful year for Pak. He just received the HKADC award for best artist of the year in May, and the CCAA Best Artist Award 2012. One member of the jury, the director of M+, Lar Nittve, describes his art as "almost invisible, almost impossible to document, but manages to explore the human in all its complexities and with loving precision." His work is definitely not exhibition friendly, for that matter the artist never likes the idea of having an exhibition. "Exhibition will end up taking the work too far away from the original idea", he says, "however I have never fought with the curators. Luckily all the curators I have worked with appreciated my ideas, and they basically let me do anything I want."

Hong Kong artists typically struggle to gain international attention, and Pak is one of the lucky few who often gets invitations for overseas exhibitions. His work is in the collection of the Tate Gallery, London and he has just had his work shown in the Liverpool Biennial. He also once did a show in the Taipei Fine Arts Museum (*Go Home Project*), but the institution was not keen on happenings - so the

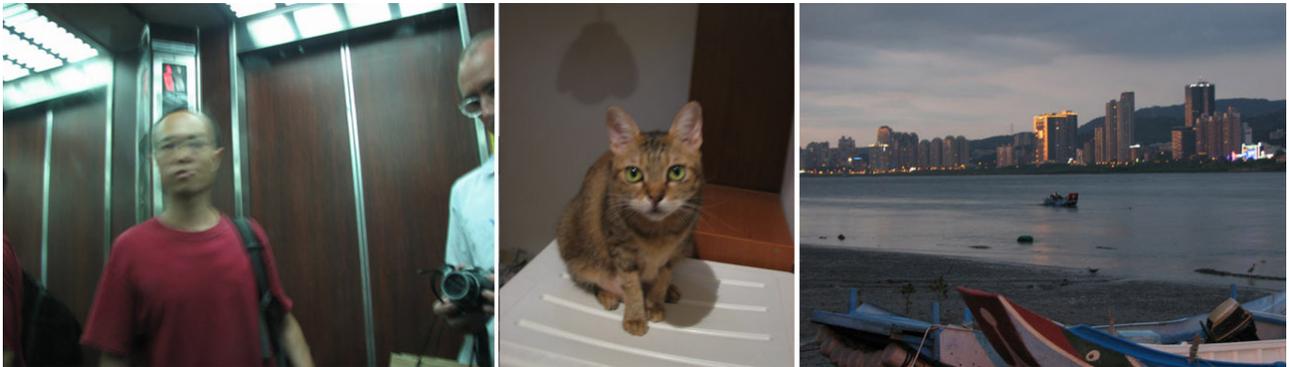
artist sat and waited for someone to happily accept his offer to accompany them back home. At the end the artist could not resist the offer to stay over, joining in for a home-cooked dinner, drinking and having a long chat. Pak says: "All of my friends love this work, the mutual trust between people really cheers them up." One may feel that city life is bitter and cold, as people keep their distance from strangers, yet here the warm side of city life is demonstrated through the participants' act. They treated Pak with sincerity and shared thoughts with him, even though he is an outsider to the people of Taiwan. The heartfelt experience is highly cherished by Pak.

A new family member joined the Pak family this year, and the joy of raising a baby boy inspires Pak's creativity. However, it is also a time for reflection. "I am now going to take up my family responsibilities. Previously I made challenging work without thinking of the possible consequences; I should now stay in a safer political zone'." To put this into context, Pak once did a piece which involved cutting up a long yellow ribbon that he had people walk over during a pro-democracy protest in Hong Kong. He then tied these cut up ribbons around the periphery of Tianamen Square in Beijing. This is a dangerous act in mainland China, where anything which seems suspicious to the Chinese police can become a threat to one's life. Accusations by the police can, for example, lead to imprisonment, bypassing all legal procedure as happened to Ai Wei Wei in 2011.

"Hong Kong is my home city. It has its very own politics, and its vibe. The whole city is operating at an extremely fast pace. It is overflowing with information. People are paralyzed and dulled by the constant bombardment of stimulation." Pak wishes to re-connect the city with its citizens by initiating a series of art projects. He successfully launched *Make A Change* with various artists, and the whole project was documented by RTHK and broadcast on the free Cantonese-speaking television channels (in Hong Kong over 80% of the population watch these channels).

Make a Change forms a series of responses to our city. Some of the acts may seem incongruous to some (e.g. Hugging friends that you have missed in the middle of the crowded zebra crossing), but it is actually testing boundaries that are invisible to us. It shows that with free choices we can make changes and we should make changes; we could make the city better by figuring out alternative ways to experience it and re-establish a connection between people. The essence of life is sadly lost bit by bit, and Hong Kong's inhabitants are in a state of discomfort, as well as lacking in security. People find reassurance in the security of a stable job, but nothing is left for them to discover beyond this job. By imagining and suggesting change, Pak is taking steps toward creating a better city.

Feng Zi Kai has had a great impact on Pak. His retrospective, held in The Hong Kong Museum of Art in 2012, is considered by



Pak as a most remarkable show. "Feng Zi Kai" Pak comments, "has lived a tough life. He survived WW2, the Chinese Civil War and the Cultural Revolution. While he was labelled as an enemy of the state during the Cultural Revolution and suffered a hard time, he still has faith in humanity. You could sense the beauty of daily life in his show - the simplest way to have eternal joy is to cherish everything we have and be kind to every species." This is what can be seen in Pak's work as well - simple but powerful, lively phrases delivering a message that uplifts the spirit, and that people can immediately grasp.

Wing Yung

*All images are from Pak Sheung Chuen's blog
<http://www.oneeyeman.blogspot.co.uk/>
All images are courtesy of the the artist*

Steve McQueen Retrospective at Schaulager in Basel

“We live in a world that’s overly saturated by moving image and I think that the core of Steve’s practice is to slow that down to understand how we can perceive beauty.” James Rondeau, curator of the show in Chicago.

The Schaulager, transformed into a City of Cinemas, presents a mid-career retrospective of works by British filmmaker and visual artist Steve McQueen. This large-scale exhibition, initially designed by The Art Institute of Chicago and co-organised in an extended version in Basel together with Schaulager and Laurenz Foundation Basel, includes over 20 videos and films, some featuring the artist himself, as well as photographs and other works covering the last twenty years of his career. The first catalogue raisonné for the artist is published to coincide with the exhibition.

The Schaulager is built from local materials; its earth-colour surface is dotted with small rocks. From a distance it looks like a small part of the landscape surrounded by a large field of grass, but as you approach it the massive building begins to dominate and reveals its facade with a small gatehouse in the front a false perspective and an entrance for visitors. The space was primarily designed as an open warehouse for the storage and preservation of works of art, and access to the collection is usually open to a limited public for the purpose of research. At the same time, two floors of the building can be transformed into an exhibition space. The McQueen show is divided between those two levels; a sensual and almost tactile Ground floor and a more political Lower level. McQueen’s *Static*, 2009, serves a transition between the external world and the show. A video of the Statue of Liberty in New York taken from a helicopter is the only piece in the room, and the propeller noise fills the entire space. The picture is very unstable, the camera moves around the Statue of Liberty, showing it close-up and revealing all the scratches and joints on its surface. Through this room of colour and sound, the viewer moves to the central area of the Ground floor that no one can avoid, where three of McQueen’s early black-and-white silent works are produced on each side of a large triangular column: *Bear* (1993), *Five Easy Pieces* (1995), and *Just Above My Head* (1996).



Steve McQueen, Five Easy Pieces, 1995, 16mm black-and-white film, transferred to video, no sound, 7 minutes 34 seconds, continuous projection.

Bear is McQueen’s first work presented in 1994 at college. The viewer looks at moving images of two naked men, including the artist himself. The camera pulls out parts of bodies; filmed in backlight, the bodies are not always in focus and escape from the camera. Faces, feet, genitals, animalistic movements of strong legs, sweat and gasps, constant movements in a fusion of fight and a sensual dance, a non-stop body language conveying aggression, power and eroticism. Five easy pieces on another wall of the sculptural triangle shows alternating images of men and women: steps of a tightrope walker filmed from below, five hula-hooping men filmed from above, constant repetition and changes from longer shoots to close-ups focused on the underbelly. Their pulsating movements suggest they are in the middle of an intercourse; a man is taking his penis out of his pants, but instead of masturbating, he urinates at the camera.

McQueen portrays people in his works, and at the same time he shows people behind the portraits; Adrian Searle, art critic for the Guardian, describes McQueen’s films as “more than the visible”. In *Just above my head*, the camera looks at McQueen’s head from the ground level, and the artist drops out of the picture from time to time, leaving the viewer with the sky above his head.



Steve McQueen, Static, 2009, 35mm colour film, transferred to HD digital format, sound, 7 minutes 3 seconds, continuous projection. Installation view.

McQueen says that it does not matter where the camera is placed, and “film language”, the unusual position of the camera, only helps to question the narrative. Just behind the *Bear*, there is an entrance to a dark mirrored room, where the *Pursuit* is installed. Moving points of light on the double-sided screen are repeated in the mirrors, one’s sense of gravity and space is misled, the awareness of one’s own body is lost; we move through lights and shadows of other shenanigans, see some figures and suddenly recognise ourselves in dark mirrors, trying to discover the limits of this endless space. Coming back to the central area and *Bear*, where two men converge in a fight repeatedly, moving around the space, the viewer becomes a part of the films, rediscovering their own body, feeling alive, present. McQueen comments on his works: “You are very much involved with what’s going on. You are a participant, not a passive viewer.

The whole idea of making it a silent experience is so that when people walk into the space they become aware of themselves, of their own breathing. (...) I find it difficult to breathe when I’m in the space. There seems to be no oxygen. I want to put people into a situation where they’re sensitive to themselves watching the piece.” Labyrinths of dark corridors lead viewers to other works. There is no linear sequence, as well as no single

focus point, but most of the works play with the senses. Schaulager creates a perfect atmosphere for the works: the cinemas are soundproof, the sound from one video does not spill over into another; all the works are isolated, supporting McQueen’s idea of isolation and language. It is impossible to guess which work will be in the next room: a barrel rolling through New York with three cameras installed in different parts of it, recording the reflections in windows; a close-up of an eye and fingers that touch the fading eyelid intimately and violently; empty and wild Giardini; each work is different in scale and quality of sound, many works are dour and depressing. It is difficult to install 20 videos in one show, as video art to a certain extent depends on the effort of others. The length of works varies from 54 seconds to 70 minutes (maybe the reason Schaulager provides a ticket for 3 visits); it is impossible to see all the films. In *Just above my head*, the camera looks at McQueen’s head from the ground level, and the artist drops out of the picture from time to time, leaving the viewer with the sky above his head. McQueen says that it does not matter where the camera is placed, and “film language”, the unusual position of the camera, only helps to question the narrative. Just behind the *Bear*, there is an entrance to a dark mirrored room, where the *Pursuit* is installed. Moving points of light on the double-sided



Steve McQueen, Bear, 1993, 16mm black-and-white film, transferred to video, no sound, 10 minutes 35 seconds, continuous projection, and Steve McQueen, Five Easy Pieces, 1995, 16mm black-and-white film, transferred to video, no sound, 7 minutes 34 seconds, continuous projection, Installation view.

screen are repeated in the mirrors, one's sense of gravity and space is misled, the awareness of one's own body is lost; we move through lights and shadows of other shenanigans, see some figures and suddenly recognise ourselves in dark mirrors, trying to discover the limits of this endless space. Coming back to the central area and *Bear*, where two men converge in a fight repeatedly, moving around the space, the viewer becomes a part of the films, rediscovering their own body, feeling alive, present. McQueen comments on his works: "You are very much involved with what's going on. You are a participant, not a passive viewer. The whole idea of making it a silent experience is so that when people walk into the space they become aware of themselves, of their own breathing. (...) I find it difficult to breathe when I'm in the space. There seems to be no oxygen. I want to put people into a situation where they're sensitive to themselves watching the piece." Labyrinths of dark corridors lead viewers to other works. There is no linear sequence, as well as no single focus point, but most of the works play with the senses. Schaulager creates a perfect atmosphere for the works: the cinemas are soundproof, the sound from one video does not spill over into another; all the works are isolated, supporting McQueen's idea of isolation and language. It is impossible to guess

which work will be in the next room: a barrel rolling through New York with three cameras installed in different parts of it, recording the reflections in windows; a close-up of an eye and fingers that touch the fading eyelid intimately and violently; empty and wild Giardini; each work is different in scale and quality of sound, many works are dour and depressing.

It is difficult to install 20 videos in one show, as video art to a certain extent depends on the effort of others. The length of works varies from 54 seconds to 70 minutes (maybe the reason Schaulager provides a ticket for 3 visits); it is impossible to see all the films and videos from start to end, and the viewers grasp a part of some works, then move on to others. The curators of the exhibition note that McQueen was very specific about how his works should be installed. The show does not change or give any interpretation to the artist's works; it offers a new experience of watching, where videos are installed as the main works of art, rather than complimentary pieces to support other works. The only disappointment is that the show will not be travelling to Britain.

Ekaterina Balyaeva

All images courtesy of Indechs.org

Contemporary Art as Alternative Culture: Wynwood Arts District, Miami

Over the course of the last decade, Miami, Florida has been actively attempting to change its image and reputation as ultimate Spring Break destination, with little else to offer aside from its beach-side nightclubs and clothing-optional-beyond-this-point bars. Part of that re-branding took place almost overnight in 2002, when ArtBasel opened its sister fair in the Magic City. The famed art fair brought with it gallerists, artists, auction house representatives, art dealers and collectors, and shed new light and interest on the southern Florida city as a potential new hub for contemporary art.

The following year, Mark Coetzee, a South African curator, and Nick Cindric, gallery director, brought together a host of the city's most eager and prominent collectors, gallery-owners and artists to develop what would become the Wynwood Arts District, located in North-West Miami, in the Design District. The initial idea was to give local artists a collective space and neighborhood in which to exhibit their work. Soon, however, the project surpassed all expectations. As it turns out, Miami locals and visitors alike are hungry for more than sun-bleached beaches and bottomless cocktails.

Driving into the Wynwood District feels more like the sprawling spaces of Los Angeles than it does rolling up 1-95 West in Miami. The creative minds that spurred the development of this district took over abandoned warehouses, forgotten factory spaces and hollowed out garages to make space for art. Similarly to the atmosphere of Los Angeles' art scene, Wynwood gives off an air of unpretentiousness, of eagerness and of endless creative potential. Because this neighborhood has grown out of a relatively young history of contemporary art in Miami, it is unobstructed by the ties of legacy, of "art world rules" and is free to sprawl in any direction.

I would argue that this freedom is what makes the area so appealing not only to those "in the know", but even more so to visitors don't have careers in the contemporary art world, who are simply curious and thirsty for their daily dose of culture. To that effect, the outdoor exhibition space known as the Wynwood Walls acts as the central main attraction to the neighborhood, the place where peo-

ple generally kick off their tour of the District. These outdoor murals make up a permanent exhibition space for some of the most celebrated street artists of today. The likes of Space Invader, Shepard Fairey and Ryan McGinness have created in situ murals for the space, marking it as a key landmark on the tour around the galleries.

Staying true to its origins as former "Little San Juan", or "El Barrio" – Wynwood was formerly the major Puerto Rican neighborhood, since the first large-scale waves of immigration arrived in the mid-1950s – Wynwood also boasts a significant amount of galleries dedicated to the promotion of Latin American art and artists; these range from young, emerging artists to mid-career artists to celebrating 40-year careers from local legends. Wynwood also boasts a significant amount of galleries. Evidence of the influence of these shows is that several of the Wynwood galleries were present at the 2013 London edition of Pinta, the Modern and Contemporary Latin American Art Fair. Miami essentially being a bilingual city, it is key that the gentrification of Wynwood and the increasingly international attention it is receiving has not dimmed the representation of its local and Latin American artists. One of the key exhibits that stood out to me was held at the PanAmerican Arts Projects Gallery, featuring two Cubano-American artists, Gustavo Acosta and Carlos Gonzalez, working in photography, sculpture and painting to explore their mixed heritage and the intense politics of their artistic practices today.

Also important is its commitment to breeding local talent, with a space dedicated to current art students: the University of Miami Project Space was gearing up for final-year student shows, highlighting student portfolios and on-going projects. Spaces such as these have been warranting the attention of international collectors (such as the Rubell family collection, the Margulies Collection and Dennis Scholl's collection, installed at the former World Class Boxing arena), who have set up base in Miami, choosing to open up their private collections in such a public realm.

And indeed, the public was an important factor in the development of this project. The inclusion of visi-

tors from all walks of life is what, in my view, maintains the organic quality to the neighborhood. The lack of big-corporation names, even in the smattering of coffee shops and boutiques around the District make you forget you're in one of the biggest touristic destinations of the Eastern Seaboard. The constant flux of artists, changing wall murals, and opening shows give Wynwood its edge and allure.

Once a month, on every second Saturday, the former *El Barrio* opens its gallery doors late for a public walk through the District, featuring tours led by the local artists and a line-up of Miami's most popular food-trucks, preserving the neighborhood quality and providing a welcome escape from Miami's stereotypical attractions. As a native of Miami, it was a breath of fresh air to rediscover this space, now featuring over 70 galleries, 5 museums, 3 private collections, 7 art complexes, 12 artists' studios and 5 art fairs. As a student of art in what can be one of the most exclusive art environments in London, it was inspiring to see that what first attracted me to contemporary art – the risk, the daring, the ingenuity, the ideas, the concepts – has evidently had the power to transform an entire city-scape.

Anakena Paddon

A Failure to Communicate: #aiww: The Arrest of Ai Weiwei

Is it wise to make an icon of an iconoclast? This question looms large over Howard Brenton's play *#aiww: The Arrest of Ai Weiwei* at the Hampstead Theatre. Although the production, based on Weiwei's own account of his 2011 imprisonment in the book *Hanging Man: The Arrest of Ai Weiwei* by Barnaby Martin, deals with many controversial issues surrounding Ai's arrest and his work, the implications of his continued deification as an artist based primarily now on his work as an activist is unsettlingly unanswered. Instead of these thorny questions about the state of Ai's artistic merit, Brenton chooses to focus on the specifics of his 81 days incarceration: the doldrums of imprisonment, the power of new media (see this obsession reflected in the cringe-worthy hashtagged title), and the importance of art to breaking down barriers of class and political persuasion.

Art as installation here morphs into theatre as installation, as the stage design imitates the popular gallery aesthetic of a white cube, filled with chic gallerinas and camera-happy hipsters, live tweeting from their seats on stage (one wonders at the bona fides of actors paid to sit on the side-lines and watch a performance night after night?) The centrepiece of their fascination is a huge wooden shipping container, disassembled to reveal the main actors and scene. Set designer Ashley Martin Davis creates two environments for Ai's interrogations within this crate: the bare office-style furniture of the Beijing murder squad department, and the taped and papier-mâché interior of the army barracks. This theatre-within-a-theatre conceit is not only a clever way to set the production apart (those in the paying audience were covertly photographing the odd design) but also served to underscore a main theme, namely that Ai's ordeal at the hands of the Chinese government

is fast becoming his most powerful work of art, the one most eagerly devoured by the art world.

As an artist, Ai has always favoured message over medium, philosophy over form, and has skilfully manipulated the media to help create his art alongside him, seen daily in his extremely active Twitter feed. Therefore it seems only fitting that a play about him defending his art is specifically created to reflect the act of viewing, on multiple levels and through multiple media. Not only is the action of the story viewed by faux gallery-goers seated along the sides, but the CCTV cameras recording Ai's cell are also projected from two monitors facing the audience, which records his sleeping, eating, and even daily bodily functions. Ai has become a living work of art is one possible take away message.

As much as his politics and philosophy has sold his art, his personality has done even more. The task of finding an actor up to the challenge of capturing the loveable curmudgeon of Ai seemed an indomitable one, but Benedict Wong not only brings to life his famous wit and genuine warmth, but also captures how these characteristics are dulled by frustration and ennui during the many hours of his captivity. Swinging from bemused boredom to violent rage within the same scene, Wong shows the slow breaking of his audacious spirit through the bewildering ordeal of his interrogation.

Because bewildered is the best word for the emotions on both sides of the interrogation table. The Beijing police, hardened toughs from the murder investigation department, are unsure of how to approach Ai, while he remains in the dark of what, if any, charges are being brought against him. This détente leads to the best moments of the play showing how this political tyranny can be overcome by quotidian interactions: a prison guard plays Mario Bros. on

his phone, the interrogators and Ai trade Beijing hand-pulled noodle recipes, and two army officers circumvent the ever-present CCTV cameras to discuss their home lives with their prisoner.

In these moments, where the formality of the interrogation gives way to a more human interaction, when Wong is most ably supported by his co-actors, David Lee-Jones, Richard Rees and Orion Lee, who take turns as interrogators. Because of the nebulous charges facing Ai, the chief goal of the interrogators are to get him to confess, to any crime stemming from his sometimes outrageous, and outrageously priced, art. Like Socrates, he is seemingly charged with corrupting the youth, through actions such as posting pictures of himself giving the finger to Tiananmen Square and having a baby with his mistress. What rankles his captors – and presumably the Chinese government – the most though is the exorbitant prices his works fetch, leading them to label him a conman who swindles the public out of money for junk. The uncomfortable shifting in seats this revelation inspired in some in the audience was due to finding that their views of the art market might more closely align with the Communist party platform than the protagonist-hero of this tale, although even Ai doesn't defend the prices, shrugging off the responsibility onto his galleries.

The interrogation scenes are taken almost verbatim from Ai's own account, and are truly the heart of the play, but the few instances Brenton deviates from fact into imagining and projection is when the pacing stumbles and any subtlety evaporates. The first is an imagined scene between two high-ranking and unnamed Chinese officials who discuss Ai's fate and the possible implications his trial could have for his domestic and international image. David KS

Tse plays the higher ranking of the two officials, and his oily mannerisms are as overwrought as the elaborate staging for these interim scenes, which features Mozart (why?) and ghastly giant prunus paintings. The overstated tone of these two scenes breaks the frenetic energy building in the Ai scenes and the dialogue feels manufactured, as indeed it was. Director James McDonald had until this point brilliantly created a slowly rising crescendo with the pacing in the interrogation scenes, which conveyed through interwoven lull and bombastic outbursts the psychological torment of interrogation, the crushing boredom of imprisonment. To throw this masterfully fashioned tension seems a waste on such an obvious statement about the paranoia and hypocrisy of Chinese officialdom.

Another stumbling block is, unfortunately, the ending monologue, a speech that under the guise of summing up produces the feeling that it contains more words but less meaning than all that has come before. However, as the speech is directly addressed to the audience, as many of Ai's inner thoughts are throughout the play, perhaps it is an appeal from the real Ai Weiwei, reaching his audience tangentially, as he is currently unable to leave Mainland China. Benedict Wong does his best to sell the clichéd recreation of Ai's famous 'Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn,' but the effect is muted as the monologue drags into the tenth minute.

The play ran from 11 April to 18 May, and was screened online for free on multiple platforms including hampsteadtheatre.com and youtube.com/hampsteadtheatre, adding yet another layer of watchers, which might include both citizens and government officials in China, proving that even remotely, Ai Weiwei is a master at finding an audience.

Hillary Chassé

You're Not Such a Dumbass, Ai Weiwei

Sing for us Ai Weiwei! And sing he did. The demands from the bored guards during Ai's 81-day detainment in 2011 have inspired the artist to venture into rockstardom, with the release of his music video *Dumbass*. It is the first single from his album *The Divine Comedy* expected to be released on June 22, the second anniversary of his release. The music video set in Ai's prison cell skips between reality and fantasy. It chronicles his daily experiences from showering to shitting, all the while constantly under the supervision of two young male guards and jumps to fantasy scenes of scantily clad women dancing with the men, as imagined by the guards. Ai's voice can be heard screaming highly political lyrics, which grounds the serious message of the hard-core rock music video.

Ai is a contemporary Chinese artist who has gained international acclaim with such works as his 2010 *Sunflower Seeds* in the Tate Modern. The installation amassed one hundred million hand painted porcelain sunflower seeds made at Jingdezhen, the epicentre of Chinese porcelain production. Visitors to the show were welcome to participate in experiencing the sea of seeds, which were laid out in a bed that covered the floor of the exhibition hall. The massive number of sunflower seeds allowed for a connection between the mass production and consumption of the rapid industrialization of China and the loss of individuality in such number and size.

In recent years, his public criticism through interviews and social media of the Chinese government and policies has brought him to the forefront as a political activist. His assistance in the design of the Beijing National Stadium for the 2008 summer Olympics resulted in him not attending the opening ceremony in 2008. Even extending his criticism to those involved with the preparations for the games such as

directors Steven Spielberg and Zhang Yimou. He witnessed the steps taken to ship unwanted citizens outside Beijing. As an artist he believed it to be his moral responsibility to shed light on such inequalities, which forced him to step away from the Beijing Olympics.

The connection between Ai's work and the political and social environment of today's China are tightly linked. This notoriety made him a public target and he was consequently arrested and detained unlawfully in 2011 for a period of 81 days. His passport was confiscated after his release causing him to remain in China. Ironically, his international presence is stronger than ever through the exhibition of his works like the current display in Hong Kong of milk powder tins arranged in the shape of China, which relate to the 2008 baby food scandal. The installation comments on the hidden facts about the production of domestic products and inequalities in accessing simple necessities. By trapping him, China has given his argument more validity and an avenue to express the injustice he has experienced. His memories of his time in detainment provided the catalyst for his *Dumbass* music video along with his hotly anticipated installation S.A.C.R.E.D that will be exhibited in the upcoming 55th Biennale Di Venezia.

The music video begins with loud fanfare similar to a Metallica song. Ai is sitting in a dark room with a black bag covering his head. The Chinese characters read: 'suspected criminal'. The musical accompaniments do not sound as violent as popular Chinese heavy metal songs, yet, the anger is strongly felt. Ai's voice drags along recalling a Beijing Opera singer, yet does not ever achieve the pitch of one. Both aspects come together like a painting on canvas, with traditional Chinese musical performance against a contemporary musical arrangement.

Throughout the video he is shown in the same dark room first getting his picture taken for the records. He then constantly paces back and forth in the confines of his cell with the two guards following his every step. He eats, sleeps, and excretes under the constant supervision of the guards losing all privacy and basic dignity. The realities of his experiences are called into question when at the end of the video Ai shaves his head and is once again pacing back and forth in his cell this time dressed in similar outfits to the female dancers of the guards' fantasies. He is now completely stripped of all dignity and left to be the joke.

The lyrics that go with the video resonate with the imagery even further. As Ai sings, 'Stand on the frontline like a dumbass, in a country that puts out like a hooker. The field's full of fuckers, dumbasses are everywhere'. The connections made are so explicitly drawn, one would have to be deaf, dumb and blind not to recognise Ai's aims. He once again takes a stance against those who work with the system he directs his critiques towards. However, the audience that should see the video are the ones who do not even know of its existence.

The vast majority of the Chinese in Mainland China know very little about the acclaimed international artist and his political activism. Since the video was released on May 22nd, there have already been over 240,000 views on YouTube. These numbers only represent the international audience who do have access to Ai's work.

One is left wondering the motivation behind Ai's foray into a realm of artistic expression so foreign for the artist. His last attempt at such song and dance was his parody of *Gangnam Style*, by South Korean artist PSY. The video, which was also uploaded onto YouTube, garnered a large viewership and revealed a playful side of Ai. However, it still held fast to societal critiques as he danced handcuffed although not as explicitly fuelled as *Dumbass*. The subtle societal critiques of the *Gangnam Style* lyrics were lost, as the song became a dance sensation. *Dumbass* could be an attempt by Ai to make a stronger connection to political awareness through popular Internet media.

When watching the *Dumbass* music video one should regard it as an artwork rather than something of true musical endeavour. It is a work of collaboration with the lyrics and vocals by Ai, musical arrangements by Zuoxiao Zushou a rocker and fellow contemporary artist and cinematography by Christopher Doyle, who is well respected for his works. By doing so, the overt political message of the video is heard loud and clear and one can appreciate the significance of the experience and critique. Sadly, if *Dumbass* were to be taken for musical enjoyment, the political message would be completely lost. Although *Dumbass* can be appreciated for its political statement, it will not be added to the rotation of many iTunes playlists or reach mainstream billboard success anytime soon.

Ai should be acknowledged for his bravery, for allowing the public to view the indignity he experienced while in prison. Initially one chuckles at the sight of Weiwei cross dressing, wearing red lipstick and a hooker-like outfit. However, after some reflection the message seeps in and one can feel the pity of such a sight. The end of the music video merges the reality and fantasy, leaving you the viewer inan uncomfortable seat. Whether or not you want to laugh at such a comical sight, however, you are drawn back to the fact that these are the memories and experiences of a man who was completely stripped of common rights.

Ha-Thu Nguyen

Robert Mapplethorpe at Au Debut (works from 1970 to 1979)

The Gallery Xavier Hufkens is currently exhibiting a retrospective on Robert Mapplethorpe's (1946-1989) early works in their new space at 107 Rue St-George, Brussels. Even when his photographs have been shown innumerable times, the present retrospective focuses only on his early and less known pieces that date from 1970 to 1979. Far from his black and white trademark of gelatin silver prints, Mapplethorpe has turned to the immediacy of Polaroid and photographic collage to portray lover and friends, such as Patti Smith, Sam Wagstaff and John McKendry, all of which played a significant role in launching his career.

For Mapplethorpe's enthusiasts, it is a must see exhibition that features nearly a century of pictures, most of which were never before publicly seen. Other famous tropes such as still-lives, nudes and the New York gay scene scatter around the gallery in a show that launches the viewer directly into Mapplethorpe's early practice.

Known for his sexually charged and overt nudes, as well as his poised and exceptionally refined photographs, Mapplethorpe made his debut in the early 70's when curator John Mc Kendry gave him his first Polaroid camera. At the time, Mapplethorpe was living together with musician/poet Patti Smith, an influential factor in the wake of his career originating his first portraits of famed subjects. Given the intimacy of the context, his Polaroid instants show a degree of vulnerability and closeness lacking in his mature work, although the sense of emotional strength, light and an aesthetic research of his signature style are still latent. These early works divulge the thematic that would pervade throughout his career while at the same time providing a more prominent and personal insight on the development of his life as an artist. Compared to his later work, the familiar and spontaneous approach of the Polaroid pictures provides an eloquent contrast to the sleek finish of his studio-photography.

The show is fresh as it turns the focus away from the controversy and the puritan dictums that his work was early subjected to, centering instead on Mapplethorpe's way of working and the process that eventually led to ripen his mature style.



107 Rue St-George, Brussels

It is an exhibition that any Mapplethorpe aficionado will enjoy as it sheds an unusual perspective on his work providing a thorough understanding of his evolution both in theme and style. Through the selected body of work and chronological curating, Xavier Hufkens gallery has managed to produce a qualitative and innovative show, which must have been undeniably challenging due to his over-exposed career.

Pauline Simon

All images courtesy of Xavier Hufkens Gallery, Brussels
Photo-credit: Allard Bovenberg, Amsterdam

Keith Haring

Political line

A large retrospective with over 200 works by Keith Haring is showing in Paris at Musee D'Art Moderne from April to August 2013. The works date from 1978, when Haring moved to New York, to 1990 with his last unfinished paintings. Curated thematically, the show emphasizes the devotion to the social and partly activist side of Haring's practice.

The title of the exhibition *Political line* establishes a context for the show. It is not contracted to the illustration of specific topics typically found in the artist's practice, such as the late predisposition to the questions of death or AIDS. The show rather presents a more sophisticated view with questions of politics and public art, and the exhibited works reflect the controversial politics of that period in America.

Main sub-themes are presented directly and occur according to the topics of the rooms and gallery guide: the individual against the state; capitalism; works in public space; religion, mass media, racism; ecocide, nuclear threat, apocalypse. These themes of the exhibition successfully reveal the diversity of Haring's practice to the audience.

Currently the problems of politics, social connotations, subcultures, street life, and environmental issues are significant topics in contemporary art and society, and Haring was an important figure to transport social messages. In the late 1980s his messages devoted to the AIDS issue were brought to the public, which had, together with the activist practices of other artists, a significant impact on the change of the politics due to the evoked rise of publicity of these issues. His famous slogan "Silence = Death" embodies the activist and propagandistic character of his practice.

This exhibition, however, aims to demonstrate the legacy of the artist's life rather than one separate thematic. With that *The Political Line* explores the critique of capitalism and mass media in Haring's work. An impact of the acquaintance with Andy Warhol is conveyed through such sub-themes as a critical perception of the commoditised culture and mass media.

The critique is seen in Haring's graffiti type drawing of the Coca-Cola canvases or introducing dollar signs to his complex comics canvases together with a sarcastic *Andy Mouse*, a parody to Micky Mouse hybridized with an image of Andy Warhol. Here is presented the relationship of Haring with other leading American artists Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat, each having



Keith Haring, *Ragan's Death Cops Hunt Pope*, 1980

high recognition in the art world today. *Pile for Crowns* for Jean-Michel Basquiat, a painting executed in 1988, pays homage to Haring's friend Basquiat, who died of a drug overdose. Together Haring, Warhol, and Basquiat share interest in subculture, street life and nightclubs. Haring's works in public space and subway drawings significantly grasp the political line in his practice.

This exhibition solves the issues which curator Jeffrey Deitch mentioned in his essay *Why the dogs are barking* in 1982 that questioned whether the public works were supplementary or secondary for Haring, which was a common critique of Haring's practice, and whether they served as advertisement for his drawings and paintings. Deitch in his essay subverts this by suggesting that on the contrary, Haring's public works could be seen as a primary aspect of his practice.

In *The Political Line* curators found a balance: both practices, made as a public art and paintings, appear complementary and not exclusive. As a result they together built the political context of the retrospective. For instance, subversive character is explored in the cut-up series of the 1980s: *Reagan: Ready to Kill* or *Mob Flees at Pope Rally*. Haring created controversial messages by cutting the words from the newspaper headings and rearranging them. The cut ups were shown in public zones, including subways, so the artist adopted a role of the speaker with a public.

Keith Haring: "They [cut-ups] had a sense of humour, but at the same time, they seemed a little bit real, so people were forced to confront them. Some people were infuriated by them and would scratch them or rip them off. People had no idea where they were coming from, but they really made one of the first big marks in people's consciousness."

Haring, as an agent of a young generation, articulated in this form the doubts referring to the politics of the leading government. These works bare the dissonance of the society and condemnation of power, such as the Reagan's support of the Vietnam War.

The show is logically built. Straightforward messages conform a core of Haring's practice. Continuous lines of white chalk on black board, found objects and canvases; cut-ups and collages; and use of a fluorescent paint reminiscent of a nightclub belong to the signature style of the artist. Haring's technique evolves through the perspective of street art, where his drawings had to become fast and straightforward as in the culture of graffiti. Graffiti artists had a challenge to render their messages before anyone got to see them, and thus the medium became political in itself.

The Political Line unfolds the issues of the power of embedding acts of violence, the relationship of the individual and state, gender politics, and public and crowd. Many of the ideas, including environmental issues and nuclear power still appear relevant today. The show explores the American political line of the 1980s and the political engagement of Keith Haring as a public speaker, activist and artist.

Elena Efremova

The Fondation Beyeler

Every year, for one week in June, a small and quiet city with a population of less than 200,000 people becomes a contemporary art mecca. The undeniable flash and cash of Art Basel, and a host of smaller fairs and events including Liste and SCOPE, draw in galleries, wealthy art collectors, and visitors from around the world. Ten minutes from these hundreds of gallery stalls bursting with works for sale, the Fondation Beyeler offers a slightly more serene respite for the weary art lover. Set in a beautiful garden, and housed in a museum designed by Renzo Piano (the architect responsible for the Centre Pompidou), lies the art collection of Ernst and Hilda Beyeler.

Founded by Ernst and Hilda in 1982, Fondation Beyeler did not find its permanent home until 1997 when the museum opened. Ernst Beyeler passed away in 2010, two years after his wife, and during his lifetime he was a renowned and well-connected art dealer and collector. He built his fortune and reputation acquiring and selling the works of modern masters such as Cezanne, Monet and Kandinsky. A power broker of the art world, Beyeler got on well with artists including Picasso and often helped major museums acquire important works. The bustling transactions of Art Basel are seemingly worlds away from the light and beautiful Fondation Beyeler, but the two are connected in their origins. As much a canny businessman as an art lover with a keen eye, Beyeler was one of the three founders of Art Basel, cementing the city's position in the international world of contemporary art.

The museum bearing the Beyeler name was built to share the couple's extensive collection of modern art with the world and is open every day of the year. The collection contains works that range from nineteenth century African figures to Monet's water lilies, Picasso paintings and Warhol silkscreens.

Aside from showing its own collection, the Fondation Beyeler also works with numerous organisations to borrow and lend works, regularly organising large exhibitions in its space. This ties in with the Beyelers' goal to generate an interest and love for art in younger generations, a remit that comes through in the museum's curatorial strategies.

On a recent visit in June, the Fondation Beyeler had on display a selection of works from its collection, as well as exhibitions for Maurizio Cattelan, Andy Warhol and a larger, well-publicised Max Ernst retrospective.

This last show travelled to Basel from the Albertina museum in Vienna, and on display are over 160 works spanning the artist's career. As might be expected for a retrospective of the developments in Ernst's body of work, wall text in the exhibition explains the different periods of his career. It is more overtly educational in nature, describing a number of techniques used by the inventive and innovative Ernst, such as frottage and grattage.

A very different sort of display can be seen on the same floor in the rooms dedicated to the Beyeler's permanent collection. The collection is rehung several times a year, and much work is clearly put into these displays. The aim seems to be a juxtaposition of works that is fresh, occasionally humorous, and which might create interesting dialogues or inspire a reconsideration of works. This is achieved to varying degrees, but overall the approach seems to yield results that are well considered yet accessible, offering something of interest to the art world insider and typical tourist alike.

In one of the first galleries, one walks through a rectangular room with African and Oceanic works on either side, to be greeted at the end of the display by a stainless steel Tweety Bird by Jeff Koons (*Titi*, 2004-2009). The degree to which this display is humorous or thought provoking is debatable, the comparison seems a bit crude, but this is probably the weakest gallery in the museum. In another gallery, Alberto Giacometti and Barnett Newman bring the space to life.

On one side is Giacometti's *Grande Femme III* (1960), the elongated figure standing over two metres tall beside *The Way II* (1969), and a medium-sized Newman painting dominated by deep crimson, with wide strips of black on either side. The vertical lines and intensity of the red seem to complement Giacometti's sculpture, but this relationship is complicated by the two other tall Giacometti figures, *L'Homme Qui Marche II* and *Grande Femmer IV* (both 1960), and Newman's *Uriel* (1955) on the wall opposite. *L'Homme* strides out in front of *Uriel*, a large painting over two metres tall and almost five and a half metres wide. On the other side of the painting is the third sculpture. In contrast to the smaller, darker Newman and Giacometti's existential figures, *Uriel* is a light aqua-blue in colour, with a couple of dark coloured zips of varying widths on the far right of the painting.

Uriel is not part of the Beyeler collection but was the only painting Newman made in 1955, after which he produced no works for two years until after his first heart attack in late 1957. Newman would later die from another heart attack in 1970, a year after he completed *The Way II*.

The way the Giacometti figures interact with the pale blue and the vivid red of the paintings, and the way the two paintings work by facing each other can vary for the viewer. However, the works of each artist clearly inflect upon the works of the other in this room, perhaps helping the viewer to see one or both of these men in a new, more nuanced light. This room sums up the Fondation Beyeler at its best- refined but intriguing, filled with modern classics that can still find new words to speak across the generations.

Natasha Cheung



Couple Under An Umbrella, 2013, Mixed Media, edition 1/1, 300 x 400 x 350 cm (approx.)

Ron Mueck: The Divine Humanist

An old couple resting under a beach umbrella. The old man, in his checkered bathing trunk, leans his head against the thigh of his wife, his left arm bent and placed on his forehead, his hand closed forcelessly in a light fist, as if fatigued. His right arm clutches on to his wife's upper right arm with light exertion, forming subtle creases on her skin around the contour of his fingertips. His legs are bent, his feet are flat on the ground, his toenails nicely pedicured with a uniform white border on each nail. The old woman sits, relaxed, next to her husband, her legs extended and her body supported effortlessly by her two arms on the side. Her hands are facing outwards and her gold wedding band is clearly visible on her left hand's fourth finger. Her mid-length hair tidily smoothed back behind her ears, her sagged body revealed through her tight bluish purple bathing suit and her slightly lifted toes suggest an attempt to clear the sand off her feet. Her toenails are lined with a faint grey rim of dirt, her ankles and the sides of her feet reveal traces of walking barefoot. The leisurely posture of the couple is contradicted by their gaze – the wife, with her head bent slightly downward, looks attentively at her husband, as if with affectionate care, as if with concern. Her gaze is imbued with a sense of knowing acceptance of what is to come. The old man has his

eyes fixed in space, as if in contemplation, or as if in a resigned state of endless waiting,

Ron Mueck's sculptures are often instilled with a sense of enigma which entices viewers to close examination. The harder we look, the more we ponder on, the more we are intrigued by the minutest sign that could suggest what is on the mind of the figures, who are stripped from their context and yet contained within a fictional space imbued with a sense of stillness that actively draws the viewers into their world. Every single detail in Mueck's sculptures feeds the viewer's imagination, yet none allows for a conclusive explanation to account for the situation before them. As Heiner Bastian aptly puts it, Mueck's sculptures do not seek for a dialogue with real space, "it is rather a monologue on an imaginary space which vanishes, emanates from the sculpture and is drawn back into it again."

Ron Mueck's exhibition at Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain presents three new works that have never been shown in public, alongside six others. Exhibiting on both the ground level and the basement of the building, this is the artist's second solo show at the Fondation curated by the Director Hervé Chandè. Standing before the steel and glass façade architecture designed by Jean-Nouvel on Boule-

vard Raspail, one can catch a glimpse of the work *Couple Under an Umbrella*, one of the new works commissioned for this occasion. A monumental sculpture measuring three by four meters, this opening piece captures every single visitor who enters the space, each being lured into the quotidian yet eerie reality of Ron Mueck's creation. The theme of the work blends almost seamlessly into the setting of the building, with its high ceiling and glass structure that admits abundant natural light to shower gracefully upon the multi-color beach umbrella, while allowing an interplay between the room and the garden, blurring the boundaries that separate interior and exterior. The show does not follow any itinerary, nor is it governed by a narrative, for each sculpture creates a universe of its own that is independent of any context.

Mueck's works draw on the fundamental universality of human experiences, evoking familiar emotions from everyday life. In his three new works, the artist explores the abstraction of human relationships through the use of paired figures. The use of scale and hyper-reality has always been a crucial element employed by the to create a sense of uncanniness – a feeling of the strange yet familiar. In contrary to the monumental scale of *Couple Under an Umbrella*, the other two works operate on a diminished scale. *Woman with Shopping* portrays a banal scene of a woman and her baby enveloped tautly in her long overcoat, carrying on each side a plastic bag full of purchases from the supermarket. The tiny, disheveled haired baby's head that protrudes from his mother's overcoat, as if yearning for her attention, is met with the grim expression on the woman's face that stares into the blank space. *Young Couple*, what appears to be an ordinary street scene of a young duo walking, is rendered ambiguous, when the viewers turn to their backs and see the boy's hand clutching forcefully at the wrist of the girl, while she seemingly tries to struggle away. Mueck's sculptures never fail to convey a sense of unease out of the ordinary and it is precisely this dual and contradictory message of familiarity and alienation that contributes to the enchanting and captivating power of the artist's works.

Renowned as an artist who never gives interviews nor speaks about his works, the fifty-minute documentary *Still Life: Ron Mueck at Work* on show at the exhibition, produced by a French photographer and filmmaker Gautier Deblonde over eighteen months in the artist's North London studio, unfolds before the viewers' eyes the intricate and painstaking creative

process. The time and attention that the artist dedicates to each miniscule detail unveils the intimate psychological bond that Mueck establishes with his work, as if through each artistic touch he endeavors to breathe life into his creation.

Tiffany Tang

Photo courtesy of Courtesy Hauser & Wirth / Anthony d'Offay, London

Photo credit: Thomas Salva / Lumento for the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, 2013

LISTE Art Fair Basel Review

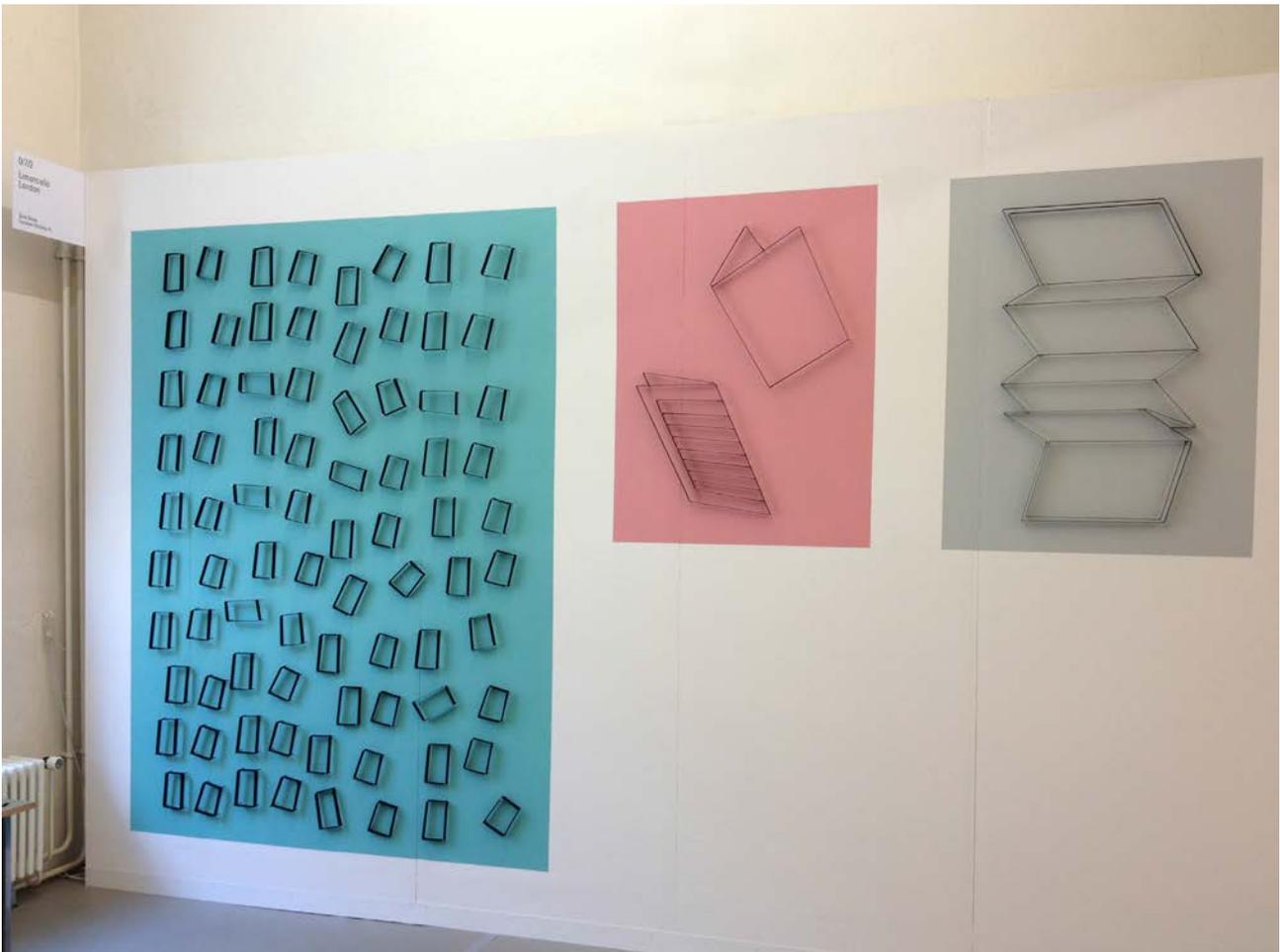
June in Basel is a paradise for art. Exhibitions and art fairs in this small city attract ambitious collectors, curators and art lovers from all over the world. LISTE Art Fair Basel is one of the city's most popular events at this time, and recently ushered in its 18th year. Initiated by young gallerists in 1996, the art fair has always promoted upcoming artists to the international market. This year, 66 galleries were chosen from over 300 applicants. Many of them have been showing at the fair for many years, with 10 galleries returning after exhibiting in the Statements or Feature section of last year's Art Basel, while 8 were selected from the remaining list for their LISTE debut, and 4 special guests were invited to the fair. The atmosphere is far more relaxed than at Art Basel, which is full of the fashionable elite and high-octane galleries. Located in a former industrial building, the experience of walking through LISTE is like an adventure: discovering works by young artists, flipping through catalogues and even talking to artists to get to know their practices.

Although many works on display at LISTE are from artists that are lesser known in the art world, there are still some galleries featuring work by artists who participated in Biennales and other big exhibitions. This year the gallery Aoyama | Meguro from Tokyo showed videos and photographs by Japanese artist Koki Tanaka, who is currently representing the Japanese pavilion at the 55th

Venice Biennale. The Berlin-based gallery, Sommer& Kohl, showed Swedish artist Andrea Eriksson, who represented the Nordic pavilion for the 54th Venice Biennale. Limoncello Gallery of London had a solo representation of London based artist Yonatan Vinitzky, who will start his artist residency at Palais de Tokyo in Paris from November this year.

The ideas that initiated many of these artists' creations came from their experiences of their surroundings and everyday life. This refers not only to environmental surroundings, but also to economic and cultural climates. The works are the end products of these artistic practices, as well as the evidence of their connections to the current era. Works by London-based artist Eloise Hawser, represented by gallery VI, VII from Oslo, draws attention to the relationships between machinery and the human form. One of her works shown at LISTE was from a new project where she took her father to a scan laboratory and collected data by scanning his figure through the machine; she then produced a round shaped optical glass out of the data she collected from the scan. The artist considers machinery as one of the most important modes of production and attempts to make something human out of cold machines and vice versa.

Helmut Heiss's work *Sound and Shapes* (2012) also deals with machines, though from a different perspective. The artist is represented



Installation view at LISTE, artist: Yonatan Vinitzky

by the Kaskadenkondensator from Basel, a special guest at the fair. He recorded sounds while walking through and around different architectures and then transferred these sound tracks through laser onto papers in a darkroom for roughly about 2 seconds. His interest in architecture and urban spaces has driven the work into explorations of the representation of late industrialization, as well as contemporary high-end technologies. The artificial sounds are translated into visual language through machines.

Polish artist Rafal Bujnowski depicted his hometown in a landscape painting from the *Lamp Black* series. He layered black paint in

various directions on the canvas to replicate the shape of the objects. Viewers can observe the lifelike picture through reflections and mirroring when the painting gets shown under light. Bujnowski is a brilliant example of one of the many artists showed at LISTE who experiment with materials, techniques and challenge the politics of the sensorial.

The intriguing works by artist Falke Pisano, represented by gallery de Bruijne, use comics and language to reveal structures through repetitions. The title of the work pretty much explains the work itself, *Repetition and Dispersion/ 4 Jokes become 5 Jokes (Economy)*

(2011). The artist wrote 4 jokes and used them as source material, deconstructed the sentences into individual words, then put them together in another order to form a different context that he illustrated with comic images. The work reflects the artist's ideas with a healthy dose of humor.

With the ever-changing forms of artists' practices, young artists innovate and constantly try out new ideas. This dynamic characteristic of the artists they represent prompts gallerists' to seek new methods of working with artists as well as running their galleries to be commercially successful. Among the 4 special guests at LISTE this year, de Apple Art Centre created the Gallerist Programme, gathering together young doers who are willing to learn how to approach the contemporary art scenery. The programme trains gallerists in the art market through readings of case studies whilst offering unique opportunities to meet professionals and collectors. The final assignment for all participants is to put up a show at LISTE with each trainee's selection of artists.

While artists are committed to their practices, many galleries have made considerable incomes from their works. Works by artist Yonatan Vinitzky sold during the fair for an average price of £1,800, while works by Zhao Zhao, former student of Ai Wei Wei, sold for between £10,000-£16,500.

The ultimate goal for galleries at art fairs is to generate sales. However, while still trying to

achieve this, galleries at LISTE enrich the fair through their tenacious drive to expose novel artists and their practices. The fair not only showcases works by artists, but also exposes the on working processes between the gallery institution and the artist. More crucially, LISTE creates a platform for artists to communicate and encourages collaborations. Through this form of content creation, artists will always be able to fascinate the art world with their talents.

Ruixue Li

Image courtesy of Limoncello Gallery, London

Hong Kong Art Basel: Insight into Urbanisation in Asia

Art Basel's Hong Kong debut proclaims the city as a metropolis and an emerging centre of the global art world. Ambitious art galleries, collectors, curators, artists and critics from all over come together, revelling in this vibrant art fair. This May, Art Basel featuring 245 galleries with half of the participants coming from the Asia-Pacific, is celebrated as the most significant international fair in Asia.

From Basel to Miami, the fair has been staged for more than 40 years. By showing the exciting modern and contemporary artworks, it attracts numerous world-renowned galleries, artists and collectors. This year, its premier Hong Kong edition makes the city a centre of the international visual arts. Busy and crowded as always, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center (HKCEC) is packed with people and variety of art-related events. Two floors are being used for Art Basel, while the rest of the area is occupied by Christie's Hong Kong for the spring auction preview. After Art Basel, HKCEC is taken over by the International Antiques Fair. During this Asia week in Hong Kong, series of events and exhibitions take place in this city, presenting and celebrating Asian art from antiquities to contemporary.

Magnus Renfrew, the fair director and one of four members of the Executive Committee of Art Basel, states that Asia has been historically underrepresented despite accounting for 60 percent of the world's population with diverse cultures and aesthetics; it is the time for general public to be aware of the broader spectrum of what is out there. Art Basel HK, therefore, is not just a new edition of Art Basel of Europe or America but an innovative art event aiming to work particularly from an Asian perspective and to construct contexts of Asian contemporary art. The art collectors and museums are the target groups of Art Basel HK. Developing its own audiences and networks in Asia is an essential goal for Art Basel entering Hong Kong-- a potential place for developing the contemporary art market in Asia, especially in China, now the

world's second-largest art market right after the U.S.

From emerging artists to the modern masters, the fair traces decades of art history across four sectors: Galleries, Insights, Discoveries and Encounters. The Galleries sector presents over 170 of the world's leading modern and contemporary art galleries by displaying artworks of different media, including paintings, sculptures, installations, photographs and digital art from the 20th and 21st centuries. The participants are rigorously selected by the committee, including many renowned Hong Kong and Taiwan based galleries: Hanart TZ Gallery, Osage Gallery and Tina Keng. Tina Keng Gallery is the winner of this Art Basel HK in terms of the top sale price: a large-scale painting *Chinese Emperor-1* by Wang Huaqing was sold for \$2.6 million. The artist renders the effect of ink painting by using oil as a medium to create an abstract appearance of Chinese emperor. Like Wang's other works, he tends to embody Chinese cultural features and to move beyond politics. Constituting a part of Chinese culture, emperor is a symbol of hegemony of ancient China; the refined brushstrokes present the artist's devotion to traditional Chinese landscape painting. Thanks to his exploration of the Chinese complex within oil painting, the artistic sensibility of this work fosters greater cultural understanding, which to a certain degree explains why someone would pay so much for it.

The Discoveries sector showcases works by emerging contemporary artists from all over the world. The outstanding achievements in this category have been awarded Discoveries Prize by the committee; the winners are Navid Nuur and Adrian Ghenie presented by Galeria Plan B from Berlin and Cluj. If one wants to buy an original artwork at a fairly low price, it is a good area to explore. Works presented in the Encounters sector are large-scale sculptures and installations by leading artists. Sixteen select installations displayed throughout the

exhibition halls transcend the traditional art fair stands. One of the impressive pieces is a project done by Chinese artists Sun Yuan and Peng Yu (Fig 1), presented by Hong Kong based Osage Gallery. Artists asked Filipino domestic workers, employed in Hong Kong, to plant a toy grenade in their chosen places that they worked in. These workers were then asked to photograph each other with their backs turned in order to conceal their identities. This project examines the tense relationship between the Filipino workers and their Hong Kong employers, and presents the phenomena of a certain group of immigrant workers living outside their home country. The photographs are displayed and mounted on each wall of the space, which is striking enough to attract viewers to stand by and go through those images, contemplating the lifestyle suggested by them and to realize an aspect of cultural ecology of Hong Kong, which exists in every international metropolis. A piece of work like this partially conveys the general aim of Art Basel HK I by incorporating the ideology of a living situation in a given Asian community.

Specifically designed for the Hong Kong show, Art Basel HK builds the Insights sector, which exclusively presents works by artists from Asia or the Asia-Pacific region. Participating galleries must be based in that region. Artworks from this sector carry strong characteristics and cultures of Asian countries and areas, specialising on the development of a real, sustainable art scene that goes beyond purely commercial concerns. Like the project done by Sun Yuan and Peng Yu, many of the works displayed in Insights concern about urban life and explore the complex relationship between the inhabitant and the city. The work *Saturday Night* by a Korean artist Insook Kim presents a glass hotel with its asymmetrical entryway. By depicting a hotel, which is ubiquitous in the city, and by using glass, a material that renders interiors visible from the outside, the artist questions the contemporary life style and social morality of human beings in the midst of so-called modernity and civilisation.

Another fascinating work exploring the Asian urban life and attracting people's attention is a video work by Chen Qiulin, an emerging Chinese artist concerned with the effects of urbanisation in China. The video records immigrants' actual life and process of deconstruction of the town. Classical opera figures amidst the city's ruins, each figure's makeup, facial expression and costume strengthen the work's visual infection, convey a certain urban phenomena and proclaim



Wang Huaiqing. *Chinese Emperor-1*, 2008-2013. Oil on canvas, 200 x 135 cm.

a dangerous relationship between Chinese classical tradition and the modernisation of Chinese cities.

It is pleasing that Art Basel HK is dedicated to highlighting the developments in Asia rather than simply imitating other international art fairs dominated by the western contexts. It provides the global audiences with opportunities to see something different; by looking into Asian contemporary art, people can actually gain an insight into Asia and its social environment. Although there is no prescribed route in which the fair unfolds, it is somehow an exceptional experience for the audiences to feast on the enchantment of the arts.

Suchao Li

*Image courtesy the artist and
Tina Keng Gallery, Taipei and Beijing*

More than Ink and Brush: 'The Origin of Dao'

New Dimensions in Chinese Contemporary Art

The current exhibition at the Hong Kong Museum of Art – 'The Origin of Dao' – is a feast stimulating various senses. Although rooted in traditional Chinese concepts, it is not limited to the works in ink on a flat surface, which retell an ancient story. This is a 'three-dimensional' space equipped with glaring new media that creates an overall movement, producing visual pleasures, which try to invade your mind and excavate your life story. Free from regional boundaries and frustrating political expression, you can engage with the contemporary art by 37 artists from Hong Kong, Mainland China, Taiwan, and the diaspora.

This exhibition belongs to 'Open Dialogue', a guest-curated series of exhibitions launched by the Hong Kong Museum of Art in 2006. The purpose of this series is to challenge the authoritative status and monolithic narrative of the museum and to encourage independent voices who turn the museum space into a platform for exchange. This exhibition, the last one of the series, aims to extend the local dialogues of previous exhibitions into an international context. That is why this show is the only one of the series curated by a professor from Mainland China rather than Hong Kong. This 'open dialogue' attempts to break Chinese art away from the Western mono-narrative; to explore how traditional Chinese art in a modern context could be understood by a global audience as it connects the past, present and the future.

The curator, Professor Pi Daojian, comes from a Mainland Chinese academic background. He has insisted on using the 'Chinese experimental ink art' concept since 1990s. And this he has been criticised for, given it is seen as excessively self-glorifying and biased by definition. For this exhibition, he chose a traditional Chinese philosophical or mythical idea of 'Dao' as the theme. It speaks from the perspective of the Chinese, which might come across as offensive to the Western public. What is 'Dao'? Literally translated, it is 'the way'. It could be the 'Dao' of Daoism, or Buddhism, or Confucianism, or others. There is no accurate definition of 'Dao' in China and it is already confusing for the Chinese audience. It is easy to imagine how hard it is for

the international audience to understand this concept, especially because the curator defines it as broadly as a combination of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, which seems deliberately mystifying. From this point of view, this exhibition reveals a tendency of self-orientation. We might pose a question: "If the meaning or theme is quite obscure for both Chinese and foreigners, how can it open dialogues between them?" Or maybe because of its uncertainty, it is able to welcome reactions from different cultures and let the works of art speak for themselves. Hong Kong being one of the busiest harbours, the innovative and cultural centre of Asia, offers an excellent location for this curatorial experiment.

This exhibition shows multimedia works including ink, lacquer, ceramics, video, music and installations to shape or tease out the 'tradition' in Chinese contemporary visual production. One of the most impressive pieces is a 30-minute long video titled *The New Book of Mountains and Seas* by Qiu Anxiong from Sichuan, China. *The New Book of Mountains and Seas* is a classic Chinese text elaborating on early Chinese geography, myth and mythical creatures. This video is projected on a long screen in a separate dark room. Visitors might accidentally stumble into this 'black hole' and be attracted by the bizarre and absurd image combinations and the psychedelic music around the mysterious black 'space'. This is a 'civilised' human society re-contextualised in the literarily ancient 'uncivilised' world. In the video, we see a peaceful village being flooded, white mice implanted with human ears, sheep in the test tubes, hairless chicken with fast growing wings, planets with electronic machine creatures, and finally the end of the world. It is a sad story. By animating the black and white ink paintings based on a classic literature, Qiu evokes a traditional Chinese ink aesthetics when dealing with the current issues -- urban development and pollution, biological cloning, space exploration and terrorism -- through the medium of video. This could be one of the most successful works in the exhibition. It forms a shared language that all our contemporaries can relate to. Qui reaches the goal of redefining

Chinese culture in a modern context through tangible tools such as ink paintings, video animation and music, combined with intangible ideas borrowed from the classic literature.

The combination of ink art, video and music brings a new twist to the tradition of ink painting. To understand the difference, the audience is encouraged to see the works of 'traditional' type like Kan Tai-keung's calligraphy landscape painting, and then compare them to the 'new' type through an impressive example of the calligraphy-themed video art by Shao Yan. Yan's new work explores a deeper level of emotiveness in the practice of calligraphy. It is akin to a martial art performance: an old man in a traditional Chinese white suite is doing his own 'abstract' calligraphy by using an injector rather than a brush. We hear the powerful sound of Chinese drums, we feel the speed of the body movement, and we start to look at the calligraphy work from different angles, in a multi-sensational experience. Video and music feature side by side with the traditional Chinese materials such as lacquer, promoting the dialogue between the convention and progress.

Despite the obscure title, the show encourages the interaction and communication between different audiences and engages in spiritual development of the public. It consists of five sub-themes: Meditation and Narration, Creation and Space, Writing and Self-Cultivation, City and the World of Morals, and the Great Harmony. Each theme is explored through multimedia works consistent with the main theme 'Dao' or 'the way', opening up new dimensions of contemporary Chinese art both formally and conceptually. There have been influential exhibitions, which linked the tradition and civilization of China with its contemporary art scene. So what is novel about *The Origins of Dao*? The 2010 exhibition *Pure Views*, curated by Lv Peng in London, showed how the introduction of Western materials, such as oil and acrylic, formed a shift in the development of the contemporary Chinese art scene. The current show offers another take on this theme by examining the marriage of the traditional thematics and techniques with contemporary media. Furthermore, its attempt to apply three-dimensional multimedia materials to ink distinguishes it from other forms of Chinese contemporary art represented in the Hong Kong Art Basel and the Hong Kong Asia Week. Thus opening up a 'new way'.

Wang Yizhou



Anti-oil demonstrators protesting against BP sponsorship of the arts outside Tate Britain in in 2010

Selling Out to Big Oil?

Now in its 34th year, the annual BP Portrait award exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery will open to the public on 20th June. This exhibition has been one of the major events in the art gallery calendar since BP took over sponsorship of the award from tobacco giants John Player and Sons in 1989 and even though the outcry over the oil company's sponsorship of the arts may have reached its peak three years ago because of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, BP's involvement remains controversial. In recent years BP's sponsorship of the award and its continued support of the Tate Gallery in particular have drawn calls from protest groups for the galleries to reject such "unethical" sponsorship: arms manufacturers and tobacco companies are no longer acceptable sponsors and now oil companies, cry the protesters, are next.

Inevitably the arguments for and against commercial sponsorship, and in particular about which sponsors are ethically acceptable, tend to be reduced to rather simplistic levels where oil companies, and perhaps now the banks, are unequivocally evil, tainting everything they touch, whereas others will argue that as the hard-pressed public purse is concentrating on providing schools and hospitals, if Big Oil is happy to pay for free entry to

the galleries and museums then surely such offers are to be welcomed. As always, the reality is rather more complicated.

In a sense, all art which is on public display is sponsored either privately or by the state or more usually by a mixture of both. There is nothing terribly new about this: whilst many of the images of the saints which decorated medieval churches were commissioned and paid for by the church itself, it was by no means uncommon for wealthy patrons to pay for altarpieces or other images which would often include small "donor portraits" within the fabric of the image. If the paintings paid for by the church carried the main spiritual message, such donor portraits were not only a means for the patrons to parade their generosity and their wealth, but also to portray themselves as pillars of the community which is perhaps not so very different from BP's sponsorship of the Tate Gallery, for example. In fact some of the patrons were undoubtedly morally ambiguous: *Pope Julius II* (1503-13) remains a controversial figure and yet no-one today suggests that his portrait by Raphael in the National Gallery should be removed for ethical reasons.

By its very nature, any corporate sponsorship of the arts is a transaction: by funding the gallery or the museum the sponsoring company will expect to derive some kind of benefit. It is rare for corporate sponsorship ever to be completely philanthropic because the shareholders (including many ordinary people through their pension funds) are generally most interested in the return they get for their

investment. A corporate sponsor may well expect measurable benefits in addition to the more obvious, if intangible, enhancement of its public image: in return for its funding, the corporate sponsor might well expect privileged access either for client entertainment purposes or perhaps even for its employees. Even so, for an oil giant such as BP the main aim of its sponsorship of the arts is undoubtedly to bolster its public image: its sponsorship of the Tate is unlikely to generate the sale of a single litre of unleaded petrol on the forecourt. Whilst the gallery receives welcome funding for exhibitions and to help meet its own costs, the main “cost” it has to consider is whether its own reputation will suffer by being associated with the sponsoring company, will the gallery or museum itself become tainted by association?

This is precisely the aim of organizations such as Liberate Tate and Art Not Oil, their main objective being to make oil sponsorship of the arts socially unacceptable so that the galleries will refuse to accept such funding for fear of losing the support of more ethical sponsors or by seeing a large drop in visitor numbers. Yet, oil companies are not like tobacco companies: if no-one ever smoked another cigarette, life would go on; indeed fewer people would die of lung cancer. The same is not true for oil: when the pumps nearly ran dry during the fuel protests of 2000, the country very nearly ground to a halt as it had during the 1973 oil crisis. Like it or not, for the present at least, the oil industry is fundamentally embedded into the fabric of modern society at all levels and while ordinary citizens continue to fill their cars at the pumps, they are unlikely to judge their own behaviour as being unethical or see anything much wrong with oil companies helping to keep their favourite galleries and museums entrance fee free.

For many galleries, their main source of income remains Grant in Aid from the Treasury, however during these times of fiscal austerity the Government is looking to cut its spending wherever it can, although it does continue to support the arts both directly and through the Heritage Lottery Fund. In a recent speech at the British Museum given by the Culture



Raphael, Il Papa Terribile Pope Julius II (1503-13)

Minister, the Rt. Hon. Maria Miller MP, it was confirmed that over the life of the current parliament the arts in general will receive £3 billion in funding, a not inconsiderable sum. Even so, it is clear that Government support for the arts will decrease in real terms and as spending cuts begin to bite, the galleries and museums will need to seek additional funding from the private sector.

The oil industry has undoubtedly behaved unethically in the past and they are certainly not saintly philanthropists, far from it. However, no-one but the most extreme environmentalist could seriously suggest that the Deepwater Horizon oil spill was a deliberate act of environmental sabotage. Of course the oil companies exist to make a profit but increasingly even they will accept that they have moral responsibilities as well as commercial objectives. Clearly, the oil companies believe that there is a commercial rationale for their sponsorship programmes: their funding is not anonymous and certainly not purely philan-

thropic. They are not charities. . . When they make mistakes or abuse their position as a utility, it is undoubtedly right that they should be criticized and , if appropriate, severely punished in the courts; indeed that is why the legal safeguards are put into place. However, they are not under any obligation to sponsor the arts and it seems deeply ironic that no-one would ever criticize them for not sponsoring the arts but some cannot wait to criticize them when they do something which benefits us all.

The protesters are happy to use computers made of plastic derived from oil and powered by energy generated by fossil fuels, if it serves their purposes. They may claim that their target is the oil industry, but if the oil companies were unable to sponsor galleries and museums it would not hurt their bottom line at all whereas for the galleries, increasingly reliant on private funding, it would be very serious indeed. One might reasonably ask whether the true targets of the protests are not those middle class favourites, the museums and galleries themselves.

Huw Pitchard

*Image of anti- oil demonstration
courtesy of Dominic Lipski/ AP*

*Image of Il Papa Terrible Pope Julius II (1503-13)
courtesy of The Trustees of the National Gallery*

The Frozen Beginnings of Art

British Museum exhibits the oldest known sculptures, drawings and portraits

If you have ever been to an art museum or exhibition, you have probably at least once asked yourself: is this art? And if this is art, then what is art? Is it the expression of the feeling of the artist? Is it the product of his or her personal inventiveness? If so, then you should visit Ice Age art: arrival of the modern mind at the British Museum, because maybe neither of these hypotheses is the right answer but art is a physical *forma mentis* proper to humankind. Or at least this is the thesis supporting the exhibition as argued by its curator Jill Cook: “all art is a product of the remarkable structure and organization of the modern brain”.

The whole exhibition, indeed, is based on the theory connecting the appearance of art in the European continent with the arrival, around 45 000 years ago, of *Homo Sapiens Sapiens*, our own human species. After migration from Africa, these humans would have developed art and music in order to cope with the indigenous population, the Neanderthals, and to deal with their new environmental situation, the Ice Age.

With unique masterpieces on loan from the major Western museums, the exhibition is able to demonstrate convincingly how what we recognise as art is the outcome of mental processes proper to *Homo Sapiens Sapiens*, even if it represents an over-simplified synthesis of the current archaeological debate on the capability of the Neanderthals to produce art separately from, and uninfluenced by, the achievements of the more developed newcomers.

The exhibition is organized chronologically, with a first section dedicated to the art of the Ice Age proper, dating to between 40 000 and 20 000 years ago, followed by the art of the renaissance of the so-called “Melting Age”, which ended around 10 000 years ago. The succession of objects displayed testifies to a vanished age when humans shared the Earth with long extinct animals, and only natural materials, such as bone, antler, stone and clay, were available to produce not only everyday tools but also to create art. Indeed the subject of the earliest art is the natural world, reduced in scale and with naturalistic and proportionate details. These accurate miniatures, such as the Russian Palaeolithic *Walking Bison Figurine*, were made in order to make the mysterious and incommensurable world more intelligible and consequently easier to control. It is what Gombrich in his *The Story of Art* calls “the power of picture-making” and Alfred Gell in *Art and Agency* defines as the agency of the index on the prototype: the innate human predisposition to believe that images, as an integral part of the subject depicted, are a medium to control and affect the subject itself.

With the passing of time, the primitive features of prehistoric art were taken to the two extremes of naturalism, with the production of pieces such as the *Swimming Reindeers* from Montrastruc, and symbolism, as with a series of abstracted female figurines dated to around 15 000 years before present. It is indeed to the representation of the female figure that a large

part of the exhibition is dedicated and it is in the depictions of female nude that it is easiest to admire the evolution of Palaeolithic art.

For about 20 000 years artists modelled bodies with exaggerated feminine attributes that careful analysis reveals to be images of women of all ages, younger and older women, mothers and mothers to be, demonstrating an intellectual ability to transcend daily experience and to capture the essential aspects of womanhood, to create an ideal and idealised female figure. Idealisation, but also striking realism, as in the oldest known *Portrait of a Woman*, found in the Czech Republic, depicting her as imperfect as she was with a heavy eyelid breaking the perfect symmetry of the face. Then a drastic change: the renaissance which lead to an increased naturalism in the representation of animals, especially on the male hunting kit, mean, on the other hand an extreme abstraction of the female figure, now stylised in simple, sexed silhouettes.

It is in this part of the exhibition that the dialogue between prehistoric and modern art, developed through all the rooms with the insertion of pieces by Mondrian, Matisse and Henry Moore, becomes evocative with the juxtaposition of ancient stone sculptures and a series of *Femmes Mandolin* by Brassai, dated to 1940s-1960s. These demonstrate the continuous fascination exercised by this art which is at once temporally distant and emotionally close to our brain.

The use of proportion, scale, perspective and movement but also of naturalism and portraiture and finally of abstraction, and the materialisation of ideas, the creation of visionary composite creatures: these are all features of Ice Age art- features that could have been produced only by a mind powered by a fully modern brain like our own, to be read and understood by equally developed brains.

Displaying Prehistoric Art is not an easy task, mainly because of the extreme fragmentation of the archaeological, historical and anthropological data: this exhibition

manages to unify and organize the different artistic expressions of the prehistoric populations under the unique thesis that the production of art depends on the physical conformation of the human brain. More surprising is the ability of the curator to integrate the oldest art produced by man with recent discussion of the definition of art itself.

From Plato onwards, throughout the history of the studies on human thought, philosophers and artists themselves have often define art as the ability to find the universal in the constantly changing world: to represent the essential characteristics of reality. Remarkably similar to these theories are the results of the latest scientific researches on the human brain, especially on the area of the cortex responsible for the vision. As argued by Semir Zeki in *Art and the Brain*, "vision is an active process in which the brain selects, from the amount of visual data reaching it, only the information necessary to obtain knowledge of the world." In other words, the brain retains only the permanent, essential features of objects in order to be able to categorize them. Art and brain, therefore, perform the same function: "the seeking of knowledge in an ever-changing world", or, better, art can be seen as an extension of the function of the visual brain. It follows that it is not possible to have art without a brain structured as our own.

The great merit of the British Museum's *Ice Age Art* is the ability to express through objects a complex scientific approach to art and to interlace old and new, art and science in an evocative and fascinating exhibition. The definition of art? Maybe we have only to rediscover it inside ourselves.

Sarena Zacarron

李傑訪問

二〇一三年六月廿七日

我的格仔布

我是 1999 年入讀中大的，那時候本地沒有院校開辦藝術系，中大就是接近唯一的選擇。學系很小，很親蜜，本科生跟職員合計也只有百餘人左右，學系物理上只佔據一條走廊和數個行政房間。由於地方很小，各年級的學生都會聚在一起，互相討論欣賞。

我的風格在大學時代已經成形。執著於探究繪畫的本質，我一直都在嘗試以不同方法鑲鍊作品。油畫所說的 Oil on canva, 可以有什麼表達方法呢？大學初期我都是自己親手做畫框，嘗試將媒界和生活接軌。

再後期大學四年的時候，我就開始繪畫格仔布了。

好像寫日記一樣，畫格仔布耗用幾天而數星期時間不等，就一直畫。畫完待乾後又把它們全都摺好（要不然可以怎樣處理？）畫著畫著就覺得它們蠻好看的，偶而掛在牆上挺有意思，偶而又會把他們清洗一下，就像真的 tea towel 一樣。

人生是由無數巧合構成的

沙士那年，學校停課，家又在接收沙士病人的威爾斯醫院對面，城市死氣沉沉。和當時的女朋友去了野餐，野餐總得有一塊野餐布吧？隨手就拿了塊格仔畫布席地而坐，用當時老闆送的相機拍了照。沖晒菲林之後看到照片，啊，好像有點新的東西發芽了。那就成了今天的格仔布系列。

機會接踵而來，現時四個畫廊的合作都是在偶然之間促成的。從前和白雙全共用工作室（那時候的白雙全已跟維他命藝術空間合作），是他推薦我給維他命的，說我的東西好怪，要見一下。還記得他們來的那天我都是半清醒狀態蓬頭垢面的，想不到在不久之後合作就開始了。

Shugo 老闆跟我是是一個晚餐中認識的。在韓國擺展覽的時候出席了一個飯局，席間所有人都喝得迷迷糊糊的，我就一直往長檯的盡頭退，直到看到對面的 Shugo。他那時候也是一個人坐著發呆。我們兩人都覺得這個飯局挺悶，就開始喝酒交談了。第二天早上他就來了看我的展覽，最後就開展了合作。

我覺得整個藝術界也就是用「信」字來維繫，所有條件加起來就是現在的我。

同儕們有的跑到倫敦紐約等地發展，我就一直在香港。藝文圈子不很龐大，會看展覽都是固定的一群人。三數個展覽之後人家對你的作品留下印象，慢慢就儲起捧場客。也開始有收藏家接洽。

給我親愛的收藏家們

第一次的作品成交是私人買賣。這個人一直在收藏我的作品。他是一個很願意溝通，很理解我的為人。
和收藏家較像朋友關係，旅遊外訪的時候都會相約見面。

我的作品很難纏，又不像油畫一樣可以工整擺放在家，而且我的創作都牽涉到暫時性的探討，所用作紀錄作品，配成一套的相片是用家中的打印機打印出來的，顏色壽命大概只有二十餘年。買回來的人都是欣賞作品中的特質，並非用作投資，所以每一次當作品尋到它的買家我還是會感到開心的。

偶而會和新晉藝術家交換作品。每次交換都帶來刺激感，從他們身上得著很多。

你有沒有試過夜半忽然驚醒無法重返夢鄉？

創作就是因為搞不清楚，有理說不清。要是能用文字表達幹麼要花時間做作品？
Stretching The Table Surface 好好紀錄了當時的情緒。檯是自己做的，一直在挖洞就生成了很安定的情緒。
創作針對的，是半夜夢醒無法再度入睡的感覺。整個人被空虛和罪疚感淺淺的包圍，很微弱卻擁有不能忽略的無力感。
展覽時經常要和自己的煩厭周旋。最好的解決辦法是反鎖自己於廁格內。門一關上世界就變得安靜。

醉酒的人扯掉我的掛布

"You(you)." 威尼斯雙年展的作品就是設定在公共與私人之間不可言喻的界線上。
在腦中縈繞不去的是更亭和太陽傘。到埗之後就決定要把他們放進去空間內。
場館門口旁的牆本來是掛上等牆高的標示香港館和作品名稱掛布，但在開幕夜當晚被醉酒的人扯下來了。後來就換了現在較小的。門口也是作品的一部分，是它帶出了整個展覽。

是次展覽感覺很好。因為 M+ 團隊的伙伴都是老相識，他們依循外國藝術機構的做法，分工很仔細，我可以專心工作。

我曾經想過殺人

離開香港，是因為城市壓得人抖不過氣。為了養住自己就得離開。人會對周遭環境產生反應，像演化論一樣良禽擇木而居，找到一個可以滋養自己的地方我就搬走了。這幾年飛來飛去，總會安排自己回港探望親人和朋友。不過不會再把香港當成我工作的據點了，因為她跟我的創作實踐實在差距太大。

躺在我的作品上

作品中有一系列是畫上英文歌詞的坐墊。環境許可的話我很歡迎大家在上面躺，上面的陳述，我希望是由觀眾自己發掘出來。或許它們會被忽略，可是被忽略的感覺也挺好（笑）。反正我做這些作品是都沒有想到觀眾，整個製作過程於我而言像勞工工作。

恰到好處

早年尚會在意作品的呈現方式，必須要達到專業水平。走過十年的創作路，現在要修成的，是恰到好處的境界。剛剛好，不要太完整，要不然抹殺了作品的生命力。反覆的磨煉其實是了解自己的過程：早年經常「做多了」，現在知道自己的節奏，在適當的時候停筆。

畫出味道來

創作總會讓我聯想起味道，想把作品烘培成某一種味道的慾望。我是用味道來記憶的人。

還有，我是一個需要把所有資料集齊才能開始工作的人，於是很多時候都在死線臨近之時努力趕工。這樣的工作模式太痛苦了，而且若然準備如此充足就怎會想草草了事？所以總會工作至最後一刻。

蘇怡

Are You Alright?

The last two decades have made arts professionals particularly aware of the tugging trans-Atlantic current that drew the epicenter of the contemporary art world away from New York City and beached it firmly upon the shores of Britain. The late 1980s witnessed the luring of global attention to London with the scent of a young generation of artists making contentious and unapologetic work. Adopting the agency of the New York pedigree while maintaining a distinctive British vernacular, this group of artists was eventually given a three letter stamp of approval: YBA. Though some of the Young British Artists are imbecilic—Tracy Emin's practice can be indulgent and Damien Hirst's *For the Love of God* (2007) diamond and human teeth sculpture demonstrates that all that glisters is not gold—several of the collegiates in this group have had an unmistakable impact on the forthcoming generations of art students, collectors, and seekers.

Anyone who has spent time knob-kneeing around London East's Hoxton Square, arguably the womb of the YBA, knows that Toronto has no reciprocal cultural borough. Happily for Canadians *Are You Alright?*, recently at Toronto's Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, transported overseas the clever liminal exploration between contemporary and Modernist art practice currently on offer in the UK. Not since the YBAs has Britain seen such a gregarious flock of art makers, though the spectacle and high production value of the former has been subverted in favour of a return to raw artistic process, mark making, and media exploration. Co-curated by Canadian artist Derek Mainella and British artist Elizabeth Eamer, this group exhibition succinctly delivers the heterogeneous climate of today's young London.

James Unsworth, an artist known for his scatological inclinations, greets viewers at the door with *I Think of Demons* (2009), a chromogenic print picturing an orderly yet clumsy pile of disembodied heads and limbs. Sat one atop the other, these slovenly appendages appear to have been constructed out of skin-coloured packing tape. The dimpled, green couch on which the grouping sits is reminiscent of a dill pickle, extending a handshake to the food photography still life compositions Irving Penn became known for—his olive on tomato on mozzarella ball marvel comes to mind.



James Unsworth, *Think of Demons*, 2009 Digital C-Type Print Mounted on Aluminium, 42x29.7cm.

The connection might seem superficial but what Penn, and thereafter Unsworth, has manifested through the photographic medium is compelling staging. Presenting *I Think of Demons* as a photograph instead of a sculptural installation affords its grotesque subject a necessary distance. It is absurd rather than insincere.

As if in reply to Unsworth's constructed subjects, Harry Burden contributes three portraits to the exhibition: *Sterile Anthropomorphic Figure (Boccioni)*, *(Epstein)*, and *(Paolozzi)* (2012), respectively. Each named artist is identified by their best known sculpture, the effigy of which is cheekily recreated through a digital assemblage of a domestic cleaning product and an image of the original art work. The likeness between these chimeric bottles of disinfectant and the sculptural feats of the artists memorialized is striking, exposing humans' willingness to anthropomorphize objects. As digital prints on bleached poster paper, each piece takes on a charming visual patina, alluding to black-and-white advertisements from the 1950s. A refreshing commentary on capitalism and commoditization, these portraits revive the quixotic revolutions emboldened by artists like Epstein,



Are You Alright? 2013 (installation view)

Boccioni, and Paolozzi. Though Burden's framing of the work in sugar-brown walnut wood does not do the images a service, the artist's use of the planar divide between viewer and pictorial space shows real promise.

Hung across from Burden's body of work is a grid of fifty celebrity faces imposing unfathomably twisted expressions on the viewer that imply the darker side of being a custodian of the world's attention. The maniacal and gluttonous visages displayed here are unpleasant to look at and Dawn Mellor, the artist responsible for the pastel drawings, has missed the mark. Subtler ruminations on the motive factors within our culture are more compelling though, admittedly, movie actors are an unfortunate but prominent one. Christian Boltanski's portrait grids of Holocaust victims still hearts and arouse intellects more, but both he and Mellor are reaching for the same thing: an interaction with shared cultural existence.

Around the corner of MOCCA's oft-used moveable walls is a modest selection of works by Elizabeth Eamer—co-curator of the exhibit. It is delightful that she escaped Woody Allen's habit of starring himself in most of his directorial efforts and her three drawings provide what was being searched for in Mellor's matrix of faces. Eamer's employment of uninflected line in (*B014*) *K003 and E004 additional beckoning* (2012) is immediately alienating, first and foremost because the succinct lines that describe the multitude of heads are all abruptly severed, never extending beyond the neck. The termination of these lines translates into a literal cleaving of the heads, contrasting sharply with the pleasing aesthetics of the artist's draughtsmanship to create a paradox that fosters a sinister and anxious feeling in the viewer. Pointing Beckoning Hands *B003 + A002* feeds this unease further given its arachnid-shaped cluster of hands and bent, multi-directional digitry. A subtle reverence to YBA teacher Michael Craig-Martin, Eamer's economical drawings transform bodies and hands into a site of otherness that enunciates the relationship between subject and object.

The entrepreneurial nature of projects such as Tracy Emin and Sarah Lucas' *The Shop* (1993), a two-floor studio and sales shop on Bethnal Green Road, was a propulsive force in the rise of the artist/dealer during the YBA era. Fittingly, Mainella and Eamer's exhibition is a handsome facsimile of this ambition, though contemporary times have brought the artist/curator to the fore.

Are You Alright? is a varied exhibition of work wholly unlike the art Toronto's emergent generation of artists are making. More than the novelty of the show, however, it is the collusion of historical awareness, present use of media, and the suggestion of things to come that leaves visitors of MOCCA with such a satisfying aftertaste.



Harry Burden, *Sterile Anthropomorphic Figure (Boccioni)*, 2012. Digital Print on Bleached Poster Paper, 84x56cm.

Rachel Anne Farquharson

Rachel Anne Farquharson is currently the Associate Director at O'Born Contemporary in Toronto

Images courtesy of: James Unsworth, Harry Burden, and Walter Willems



Notes on Oreet Ashery's *Party for Freedom*

The audience waited patiently in the basement of the Shadow Box Cinema in Clerkenwell, seated in makeshift rows of sofas, armchairs and benches. The low buzz of animated chatter conveyed the anticipation of what was to come in Oreet Ashery's *Party for Hire*, the itinerant pop-up performances featuring Ashery's video/sound piece *Party for Freedom* | *An Audiovisual Album*. Suddenly the six performers (three male and three female) came barrelling down the stairs: one strumming chords on an acoustic guitar and the rest carrying the accessories to be used during the performance, some of which included an inflatable dinghy, a sheep-skin carpet and a paint-splattered porcelain pig. The somewhat orderly seating arrangement was immediately dismantled and everything was pushed to the walls of the room, forming a circle from which we could watch not only the performers and the installation, but also one another. And as the performers started climbing all over the furniture, taking their clothes off and giving them to audience members 'to watch over', and then handing out a digital camera and camcorder to be passed around throughout the performance and document the action, it became clear that we as an audience were not merely spectators but we were a part of the ride.

Party for Freedom is a multi and single channel video with an accompanying soundtrack that attempts to convey the paradoxes and contradictions inherent in the social and political definitions of the word 'freedom' as experienced in Western society. Taking its name from the Dutch neoconservative political Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid), the artwork "interweaves complex elements of experimental performance, nude theatre and political satire, punk music and trash aesthetics, in order to deconstruct, via cutting parody, the paradoxical ideology that joins the freedoms

of sexual transgression to the xenophobic and murderous intolerance of outsiders". The Partij's head member, Geert Wilders, has an important presence in the video as the embodiment of this inconsistency: he advocates for anti-multiculturalism and anti-Islamism in the promotion of Dutch values, which includes tolerance for Holland's ultraliberal sex and drug tourism. While *Party for Freedom* was primarily shot in the lush gardens of a 13th century church in Suffolk, England, this political context and the people involved serve as important stimuli for the apparent breakdown of values and stereotypes that ensues throughout the film and performance.

Ashery, through the actors in *Party for Freedom* and the performers in *Party for Hire*, brings the viewers and audience to explore—using caricature, analogy and direct experience—the depths of the discourse on personal, social and political freedom. All of the performers were naked for the entire performance, save for one male who remained fully clothed with a long, blonde wig. The interactions between the performers occurred simultaneously as the actions taking place on screen, moving fluidly from perverse and obscene, serene and graceful, **animalistic** and pugilistic. The multi-sensorial combinations of activity viscerally evoked past forms of avant-garde and transgressive thinking such as the Nachtkulture (naked culture) movement in Germany, the Viennese Actionism and other body-art movements post-WWII, and the free love movement and Living Theater happenings that began in the late 60s. We watched as a performer got down on all fours and swung his scrotum back and forth, as another spun around and around like a Whirling Dervish with litheness and grace, and then as they all tackled and fought each other inside the dinghy. The choreography didn't seem to make any sense or have any kind of progression; it was automatic, an experience of being and feeling in the present moment, however chaotic and perplexing.

There were attempts made to involve the audience throughout the development of the performance, including our voyeuristic

documentation and an invitation to take our clothes off. As no one in the audience chose to remove his/her clothes, watching the performers became a metaphor for watching an Other, of sexualising and denigrating what is not understood in one's environment. Ashery depicts this scenario in the film through an Asian woman, wearing nothing but an apron, swatting at flies buzzing around a posh house—a stereotypical embodiment of desire threatening the lives of those that 'do not belong'.

This continuous insertion and examination of the political concurs with TJ Demos' observation of the Party as "a site where sexual de-politicisation and political exclusion collide [...]. The contradictory politics of desire ascribed to the *Party for Freedom* exists in the sense that one type of freedom (individualist, liberal, sexual) excludes other kinds of freedoms (those of migration, multiculturalism, religious freedom), yet each appears constituted by the exclusion of its other". In another scene from *Party for Freedom*, a male and a female, both naked, are cavorting about on all fours and grunting "Geert" as they go. The man eventually overtakes the female, pulls her to the ground and then rides on top of her through wooded brush as he would a horse. This exposure of the darker sides of human nature –its brutal, competitive and animalistic qualities– with the invocation of Wilders' name, is an overt criticism of his extremely reactionary beliefs and a general comment on the power of fear and distrust to influence human behaviour. And although Ashery's *Party for Freedom* and *Party for Hire* present brazen exaggerations and outlandish events, they beg the question of whether or not there is room for peaceful coexistence.

The political charge that suffuses the *Party for Hire* is in part sustained by a major legacy of grassroots counter-cultural or protest movements. The Party travelled around London –commencing significantly on 1 May, the International Day of the Worker– performing in any space that could accommodate up to ten people. At the end of each gathering (as they are called on the ArtAngel website), the performers dress, pack up their accoutrements and leave

the site as if it had never been occupied. But the magic of the Party is its ability to transform, to add new layers of meaning and experience, to effortlessly change spectators into protagonists. A similar effect to that of Daniel Quinn's *The Story of B*, whereby reading or listening the teachings of the spiritual leader B automatically metamorphosed one into another B, by taking part in and experiencing the *Party for Freedom*, we essentially become part of the Party ourselves. In this way, as we relate our experiences to others, as we consider the personal resonances, as we think about and connect with the world around us, the Party continues: it persists in the questioning of socially accepted definitions and norms, and it succeeds in bringing people together in creativity and cooperation.

Alexandra Schoolman

Alexandra Schoolman is currently a Gallery Assistant at Henrique Faria Fine Art in New York City, and American Art Curatorial Intern at the Newark Museum in Newark, New Jersey

On previous page, Oreet Ashery. *Party for Hire*, 2013.
An Artangel commission.
Image courtesy of Oreet Ashery

A Visit to the Sharjah Biennial with Shahzia Sikander



Sharjah Rooftops

Sharjah is one of the seven United Arab Emirates. It is located just north of Dubai. During the 19th century, Sharjah was the main harbor in the lower Gulf for trade, bridging the interiors of Oman, India and Persia with North Africa and the Middle East. Sharjah's main exports at that time were salt and pearls. Today, its primary economic resources are crude oil and gas.

This year, from March 13 – May 13, Sharjah hosted its 11th biennial. Titled “Re:emerge, Towards a New Cultural Cartography”, the exhibition is the fourth under the direction of Shiekah Hoor Al-Qasimi, President, Sharjah Art Foundation. The exhibition includes 112 artists and 37 site-specific commissions. Artists were selected by Yuko Hasegawa, curator, whose curatorial statement excerpted below defines the biennial's thematic underpinning.

The Silk Road, which spanned both ocean and land, not only stimulated economic exchange and development but also vastly reshaped our cultures. Illuminating these shared historical roots in the context of the present allows us to re-orientate ourselves once again, and to reexamine the historically significant geopolitical and cultural role of the Arabian Peninsula.... I was inspired by the courtyard in Islamic architecture, in particular the historical courtyards of Sharjah, where elements of both public and private life intertwine, where the 'objective' political world

and the introspective space of subjectivity intersect and overlap.... the courtyard is the central concept for this Biennial...It will be used both as a practical site and as a metaphorical condition...

I travelled to the Sharjah Biennial with Art21, the non-profit art education organization I work for that makes documentary films focused on contemporary art from the perspectives of artists themselves. My colleague, Ian Forster, and I were there (he with camera, myself with accompanying equipment) to follow artist Shahzia Sikander and archive her experience.

Shahzia is one of the artists commissioned by the Sharjah Art Foundation to create a new series of works for the biennial (Parallax, 2013 and The cypress is, despite its freedom, held captive by the garden, 2012). She also presented a new performance work – developed with local poets and the composer Du Yun – as part of the opening week's festivities.

Over the course of seven days, we gained an inside view of the biennial through Shahzia's eyes, watching rehearsals for performance-based works, observing installation of site-specific and interactive sculptures prior to the opening, talking to artists about their processes, witnessing the opening ceremonies, and gaining greater knowledge of Sheikah Hoor Al Qasimi's extensive efforts to bring contemporary art to Sharjah and its residents, many of whom are



migrant workers.

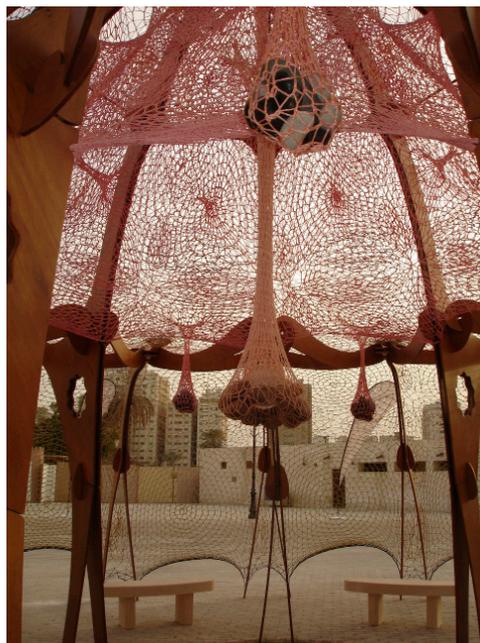
As a bit of background, Sheikah Hoor's father, the emirate's ruler Sharjah Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qasimi, has an extensive collection of artworks, ranging from 15th century maps to Orientalist art of the 18th and 19th centuries to contemporary works. His collection is housed in the Sharjah Art Museum and is free to the public. The introductory text and framing narrative for the collection emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the past and preparing for the future:

Explore the history of the region through the Orientalist painters of the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as gallery after gallery of stunning landscapes, cityscapes and portraits painted in oil, watercolours and acrylics, created by both local and internationally renowned artists....you will see graphic displays exhibiting an amazing array of styles and interpretations created by artists from the Arab world, in a variety of media. Encounter painting and sculptures to capture and cultivate your imagination.

Sheikah Hoor Al-Qasimi advances her father's values through her work at the Sharjah Art Foundation and, with this biennial, made art an unavoidable entity in daily life. With Curator Hasegawa, she commissioned works that were readily accessible: placed in main areas of walking street traffic; reflective of Sharjah's heritage and history; and playful – designed for families to sit on, walk through, and experience in a light hearted manner.

Highlights of the works that we discovered with Shahzia are:

1) *While Culture Moves Us Apart, Nature Brings Us Together* (2013), Ernest Neto – a large wooden sculptural frame covered with crochet rope that created a canopied pavilion. Underneath the canopy, there is a circle of seating and a small “pond” filled with water dripping from a ball of ice, held aloft in the center of the sculpture by the crocheted rope. Throughout the day it melts in the desert heat.



Ernesto Neto, While Culture Moves Us Apart, Nature Brings Us Together, 2013 (Crochet with polyester rope, ice, stones, plywood, grass, fiberglass, water, clay and wood connectors, and loam 486.4 x 1,038 x 1,028.6 cm)

2) *Conversion* (2013), Lucia Koch – a light-based installation in a heritage courtyard consisting of pivoting panels that filter natural light. The panels define moving sculptural forms across the building's floor and walls, which change continuously throughout the day and disappear at night.

3) *Bubble* (2013), Kazuyo Sejima + Ryue Nishizawa/SANAA – a temporary pavilion made of large transparent acrylic bubbles piled vertically in what looks like a precarious and delicate heap.

4) *Dictums 10:120* (2011-13), Wael Shawky – a multi-part project whose central aspect is a qawwali song made up of fragments of curatorial talks translated into Urdu and sung by two renowned qawwals from Pakistan along with 30 local migrant workers, also from Pakistan. The work examines the relationship between art organizations and their local communities.

5) *Don't Cross the Bridge Before You Get to the River* (2008), Francis Alys – an extensive



Kazuyo Sejima + Ryue Nishizawa / SANAA, Bubble, 2013 Acrylic, aluminum and steel

installation based on Alys' wish to create a conceptual and physical connection across the Strait of Gibraltar, which is 13 km wide. "If a line of kids/leaves Europe towards Morocco,/and a line of kids/leaves Africa towards Spain,/ will the 2 lines meet in the chimera of the horizon?" Created in 2008, this work is one that Alys set aside and returned to, needing time to determine the right context and the work's meanings.

With well over 100 artists' works to see, it was easy to be overwhelmed by the sheer volume of visual stimulation. I was grateful to be able to spend time with as many artists as we did. They offered wide-ranging perspectives on their experiences in Sharjah as well as different facets of their engagement with the biennial's theme as they developed new works for the exhibition.

You can hear what the artists say and have your own artist-led tour of the biennial via Art21's film, which will premiere in fall 2013.

Diane Vivona

Diane Vivona is currently the Director of Development for Art21

Full page images in order of appearance:

Shahzia Sikander and Art21 Crew

Wael Shawky Performance, Dictums 10:120 (2011-13)

Sign up for Art21's newsletter at art21.org/
Follow Art21 on Facebook or Twitter to be alerted to the premiere date. <http://www.art21.org>

Photos taken by Diane Vivona





CHRISTIE'S
EDUCATION | LONDON